

CHAPTER I. A MONKEY'S TAIL.

RODERICK was idly swaying to and fro in the hammock, with one leg dangling over the side and a book on natural history, which he had been reading, held listlessly in his hand while he gazed up into the leaves over his head. It was on a warm summer's afternoon, and the air around him was filled with sounds of busy animal life. Birds were twittering overhead and bees were droning near by amongst the flowers in his aunt's garden.

He was feeling very happy and contented with his surroundings, while his mind was filled with vague surmises and wonderings as to what the adventures of the next day would bring forth. He had been invited to London for the sole purpose of visiting the Zoological Gardens, and here he was, at his aunt's house at Regent's Park, within a stone's throw of that marvellous place, of which he had read and heard so much.

Roderick was very fond of animals of all kinds, and had quite a number of pets of his own—a pony, a dog, some pigeons, two guinea-pigs, a jackdaw, and a rather disagreeable white rat, who would make friends with no one but Roderick himself, and who, even with him, was occasionally uncertain in temper. The boy had received a very good report from his master at the

end of the past term, and had gained as a prize a handsomely-bound volume on natural history, and now the prospect of visiting the Zoo and making the acquaintance of the animals themselves in real life was to him a very exciting one. "I wonder," he was saying to himself, "if it will be better than the menagerie that came to Rockbridge last year, because, if it is, it must be jolly fine."

He was just ruminating on this matter when a head stealthily appeared over the very high wall which separated his aunt's garden from the adjoining one. Roderick hurriedly sat up with a view to seeing more clearly who it was, and in doing so unfortunately overbalanced himself, and came to the ground with a crash.

An irritating sound of mocking laughter came from over the wall, and as Roderick ruefully rubbed his head a voice cried: "That's a silly thing to do. Whatever did you do that for?"

"You don't suppose I did it on purpose, do you?" said Roderick, angrily.

"I don't know," was the reply. "Boys do very stupid things sometimes."

Roderick had a good stare at the very remarkable-looking face surmounted by a sailor hat which had appeared above the wall. It was impossible to judge of the age of the person to whom it belonged, it was so curiously wrinkled and marked, and yet old gentlemen don't wear sailor hats, and so Roderick, as he picked himself up and slowly walked towards the wall, asked, curiously: "Well, aren't you a boy yourself?"

"Certainly not," was the answer. "Look here," and springing lightly to the top of the wall the creature turned about, and Roderick could see, by a long tail which hung down behind him, that, although he was clothed in an entire sailor suit, it was nothing more nor less than a monkey who was talking to him.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed. "I didn't know that monkeys could speak."

"You seem to forget that we are in London," replied the Monkey. "I've resided here for some time, and have found it quite easy to pick up the language—we all do. There's a Polar bear and one or two other animals over the wall here who are learning French from a guinea-pig that once belonged to a family in Paris, and who is now making quite a good thing out of his knowledge of French."

Roderick stared with amazement. "What is over the wall, then?" he asked, curiously.

"This is the Dwindleberry Zoo," replied the Monkey.

"Not the *real* Zoo?" exclaimed Roderick.

"Er—a—not exactly," said the Monkey; "that is, it depends upon what you call real. In the other Zoo the poor, wretched animals are shut up in cages; here we do as we like, and manage our affairs by ourselves. The fun of it all is, nobody knows about us at all. This is an immense garden which, when we discovered it, had been standing empty for years. You see, it has a very high wall all round it, and no entrance anywhere, and no one has ever been able to get inside. Not that anyone has ever troubled much about it that I know of. They see the blank wall and think that there probably must be an entrance to it somewhere, and leave it at that. The birds told us about it first, and so we animals took possession of it for ourselves. Of course, there *is* an entrance to the place somewhere, but it is *not* through the wall, it's by means of a subterranean passage leading from what you call the *real* Zoo. It's kept *very* secret, but when any of the animals *do* manage to escape from that place, as they sometimes do, the birds tell them how to get here, and they come and—er—live happy ever after, as the story books say."

"Then there are all sorts of animals over there now, I suppose," said Roderick, who was becoming greatly interested in what the Monkey was telling him.

"Of course; animals, and birds, and insects, and even fishes," declared the Monkey.

"And can they all talk, like you?" demanded Roderick.

"Talk! Certainly; they'd be very stupid if they couldn't, having been in the real Zoo, as you call it, for years some of them, and heard the conversation of the stupid people who come to see them every day. They *can* all talk even there if they wish, but it has been agreed between them that they shall never let the humans know that they can do so. Here, of course, it's different. We have no humans here at all."

"I *should* like to come over the wall," said Roderick, suddenly; "it would be fun, much better than the real Zoo."

"Well," replied the Monkey, after thinking for a minute, "you couldn't possibly get over the wall, and, as I said before, there's no *visible* entrance, but I *may* be able to let you into the secret of getting in here. Wait a minute or two and I'll ask a few of the other animals; perhaps we can manage it; we'll see."

Roderick waited with considerable impatience while the Monkey, who had suddenly disappeared from the top of the wall, was gone. During the time he was waiting several heads were thrust over the wall and quickly withdrawn again, after their owners had had a good look at him; also two or three big birds flew up into the top branches of the trees and stared curiously at him for a moment and then flew down again, all except one bird with an enormous beak, who, after wiping a pair of spectacles with a red pocket-handkerchief, adjusted them carefully in order to see more distinctly.

"I shall object," Roderick heard him say; "I don't like the look of him at all, I shall decidedly object."

"Pooh! Nobody cares what you think, Toucan," said the Monkey, appearing at the top of the wall at this instant. "You're to come in, if you like," he added, speaking to Roderick.

The boy gave a great sigh of relief. "That's good!" he said. "Ripping! Now, then, how am I to get in? I'll come at once."

The Monkey threw down a small twig on which were some leaves and a small red berry. "That's a dwindleberry," he explained. "I'll tell you what to do with it at the proper time. Now follow along the wall to the very end of your garden, this way," and he ran along the top of the wall so quickly that Roderick had hard work to keep up with him. "Now, then," said the Monkey, "see if you can find a tiny hole in the wall just near the ground, behind that piece of ivy there."

Roderick pushed the ivy aside, and soon discovered the hole the Monkey had referred to.

"That's right," said the Monkey. "Now swallow the berry and you'll find that you'll quickly dwindle away till you are small enough to creep through."

"But—but—how shall I get to my proper size again?" stammered Roderick, hesitating before adopting this strange method of getting the other side of the wall.

"Oh! that'll be all right," said the Monkey, reassuringly; "you'll grow again when you get this side, and will soon regain your present height."

Roderick gazed dubiously at the little red berry for a moment or two, and then popped it into his mouth.

"Remember my name is Jack," shouted the Monkey, from what sounded a long way overhead. "And remember that I object," screamed the Toucan; and Roderick felt himself shrinking and dwindling till at last he could have been no taller than an inch or so high at the most, for the ivy leaves now seemed immense, while the little hole in the wall looked exactly like a long dark tunnel, through which he could see the sunlight gleaming in the distance.

As soon as he had become a little used to the strangeness of feeling so tiny, Roderick stepped into the tunnel and hurried through. He looked about him eagerly when he got to the other end, and for a moment could discover nothing. He seemed to be at the entrance of some strange-looking forest of tall trees with green glossy trunks, which, however, he presently decided was really only grass, but which from his present height looked very much taller than it really was.

He was just timidly beginning to explore the forest when he was startled by a loud snore. Hastily looking towards the spot from whence the sound proceeded, he beheld an enormous beetle—or, rather, one which looked enormous to him—fast asleep on a settle outside the door of a little hut which was half hidden by the tall grass. He was dressed in a long coat and wore a cocked hat, both heavily trimmed with gold braid, and beside him on the ground lay a long wand of office. "Why," laughed Roderick, "he looks exactly like the funny old gentleman I saw at that old-fashioned church we went to on Sunday, who they said was the beadle."

The Beetle yawned and struggled to his feet, staring stupidly at Roderick in a half-dazed manner.

"Are you a beadle, please?" asked the boy.

"Beetle? Of course I'm a beetle!" was the surly reply. "What did you imagine I was—a crocodile?"

"No," laughed Roderick. "Of course, I can see you're a beetle. I asked if you were a beadle—spelt with a 'd,' you know."

The Beetle gazed at him with a vacant air. "A beetle spelt with a 'd'? Certainly not!"



"'THAT'S A DWINDLEBERRY,' HE EXPLAINED."

I never heard of such a thing. That's not the way to spell beetle; and besides, I'm not here to answer questions—I have to ask them. Stop where you are for a minute."

He vanished inside the hut, reappearing almost immediately with four large, thin books, which he spread out on the settle. "Now, then," he said, picking up one marked "Insects," "what are you?"

"Me? I'm a boy," said Roderick.

The Beetle glared at him. "Boy? boy?"

What's that—a bird, a beast, a fish, or an insect?"

Roderick laughed. "Why, neither, of course," he said. "I'm just a boy, you know."

"There's only those four," said the Beetle, discontentedly, looking from one to the other of the books and turning them about so that their titles were clearly visible, "and I've got to put you down in one of those books. You can't be an insect, you know, you haven't enough legs; an insect always has six or more. Can you fly?" he asked, suddenly.

"Fly?" said Roderick, in a puzzled voice. "No, of course not. Why?"

"I thought you might possibly have been a bird," declared the Beetle. "They only have two legs, most of 'em."

"Well, I'm not a bird, anyway," said Roderick.

"And you're not a fish, because fishes don't have any legs at all; and you're not a beast, I suppose, because they have four legs—one at each corner—and a tail. You haven't a tail, have you?"

Roderick laughed, and shook his head.

"No," said the Beetle, in a resigned voice, "I thought not. Well, goodness knows where I'm going to put you down, then; I'll have to call the Bumble-Bee," and he began to ring violently at the handle of a bell which hung beside the hut.

CHAPTER II.

NO TAIL AT ALL.

"DID you ring?" asked a husky but amiable voice, as a curious-looking head was thrust out from one of the windows of an upper storey in the hut. "Because if you did I'll be down in a minute or two. I've just been having a nap."

"Yes. Hurry up!" said the Beetle. "I can't make out what *this* is," and the Beetle pointed rather contemptuously at Roderick.

The Bumble-Bee, for it was he who had appeared at the window, gave a comprehending nod, and presently could be heard stumbling clumsily down the stairs. "Now, then," he cried, as he appeared at the door, "what's all this about?"

"What *is* this?" cried the Beetle, still pointing at Roderick. "I'm bothered if I can make out. I thought he was a beast of some sort, but he hasn't a tail."

"What does he say he is?" demanded the Bumble-Bee.

"A boy," was the reply.

"Rubbish!" declared the Bumble-Bee.

"I've seen boys before. They're a hundred times bigger than that."

"Yes, but——" began Roderick, wishing to explain.

"He's some sort of an insect, I should say," interrupted the Bumble-Bee, continuing as though Roderick had never spoken.

The Beetle gave a sigh of relief. "That's all right, then," he declared, immediately beginning to write in one of the books. "I had an idea he was something of that sort. I'll put him down as a—a—a microbe, shall I?" said he, as a sudden inspiration.

"No—no," said the Bumble-Bee; "he says he's a boy; we must give him some kind of a Latin name to fit what he says—all the insects have Latin names, you know. Just put *Pueribus Vulgaris*. It's not very good Latin, but quite as good as many of the names insects get. Put him down at that, and leave off worrying."

"Done it!" declared the Beetle, closing the book with a bang. "Now, will you show him around, or shall I?"

"Oh, I'll take charge of him if you like," said the Bumble-Bee, amiably. "Wait till I get my hat."

"Now," said the Beetle, shaking quite a number of claws at Roderick, warningly, "remember you're an insect, and behave as such, and don't ever again forget what you are, because if you do——" What he was going to add Roderick never knew, because at that instant the Bumble-Bee returned dressed ready for walking, and, motioning Roderick to follow, led the way into the forest of grass.

Roderick bowed politely to the Beetle as he passed by him, but that creature was busy and didn't take the slightest notice, except to call out to the Bumble-Bee, after they had gone some little distance, "Take care! I don't know whether he ought not to have been described as a bird; they can't *all* fly, you know, and——"

"Come on! Don't take any notice of him," said the Bumble-Bee. "He'll be trying to make out that you're a fish presently. He doesn't know what he's talking about half the time."

Roderick was not sorry to take the advice which the Bumble-Bee gave, and so he hurried after this amiable new-found friend, and soon left the rather disagreeable old Beetle behind. "Where are we going to?" asked Roderick, curiously.

"Well, let's see," said the Bumble-Bee, stopping still and scratching his head thoughtfully. "We'll just go and have a look at the Ants' Dairy Farm first, and then I want to

call in at my house to see if there are any letters for me, after which we can decide what is the best way of passing the rest of the afternoon."

"The Ants' Dairy Farm?" said Roderick, greatly interested. "Is it really a Dairy Farm? And shall we be able to get milk there?"

"Ahem! Not *exactly* milk," said the Bumble-Bee, "but something very sweet and nice which they *call* milk. It's something like what used to be called mead, which some years ago was made in England out of honey. But here we are, and you will be able to judge for yourself."

They had suddenly come in sight of a kind of farmhouse with a number of low sheds at the back of it, and over the gate leading to it was a board bearing the words: "New milk, fresh from the Aphis," in large letters. The Bumble-Bee pushed open the gate and led the way to one of the sheds, at the door of which they peeped in.

Roderick gasped with amazement, for contentedly eating some green food placed before them were rows of curious-looking creatures, beside each of which a big black Ant sat on a three-legged milking-stool, collecting the so-called milk in a pail. "Oh!" cried Roderick, "I thought they'd be cows."

"Cows, indeed!" laughed the Bumble-Bee. "What would be the use of cows to us at our size, I should like to know?"

"I—I'd forgotten that," admitted Roderick. "Well, what are these, then?"

"Aphis," explained the Bumble-Bee. "They belong to the Ants, and I'm sure you'll be very welcome to taste some of the milk, if you wish."

"With pleasure," said the Ant nearest to the door, getting up and reaching down two silver mugs from a hook on the wall and then pouring some of the milk into them.

"I—I'm afraid I haven't any money with me," stammered Roderick. "You see, I——"

"Pooh! Don't worry about that!" said the Bumble-Bee. "Everything's free here. We all do what we can for the good of the others. Isn't that so, Ant?"

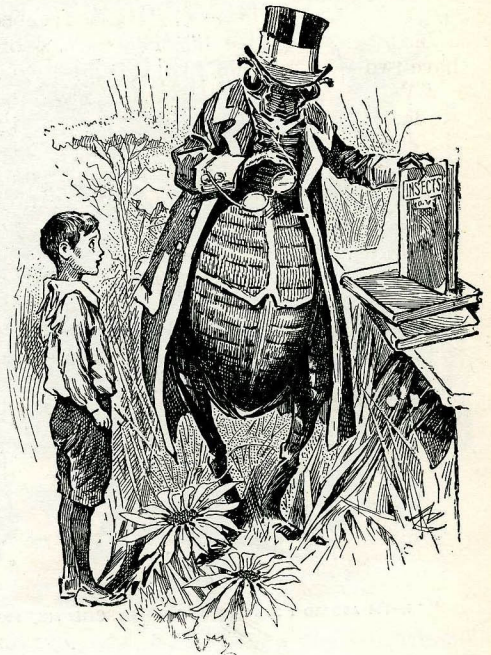
The Ant, who was wiping his hands carefully on his apron, nodded and smiled. "That's so, Bumble-Bee. It's only selfish people who live for themselves alone. 'Each for all' is our motto, eh? Are you going to the garden party this afternoon?" he asked, turning the subject quite suddenly.

"Didn't know there was going to be one," declared the Bumble-Bee.

"Oh! then *you* haven't had an invitation, either," said the Ant, with a slight sigh of relief. "Perhaps they're not all issued yet."

"Who's giving it?" questioned the Bumble-Bee.

"Oh, the Butterflies," was the reply. "It's to be a grand affair, I believe. The Fritillaries will be there, and the Purple Emperor, the Red Admiral, and even the Painted Lady is invited, I'm told, though it's bound to cause a good deal of gossip. However, I think they're quite right to invite *all* of their relatives, and there's no reason why the Painted Lady should be omitted. I dare say she's not so bad as she's painted,



"THE BEETLE GLARED AT HIM. 'BOY? BOY? WHAT'S THAT—A BIRD, A BEAST, A FISH, OR AN INSECT?'"

after all. The Moths are invited, too, I'm told, as well as the Ladybirds, the Dragon-Flies, and the Snails. There will be a band, of course, and the Cockroaches, the Grass-hoppers, the Crickets, and the Earwigs are to form a full orchestra, and are going to play Mendelssohn's 'Bees' Wedding.' I'm sure," he added, with a sigh, "I hope we shall be invited. I'm simply dying to go."

"Oh! you're *sure* to get an invitation," said the Bumble-Bee. "If not I should go without, if I were you. You're such great friends with the Butterflies."

"I don't know," said the Ant, sadly. "The Meadow Brown Butterfly was here

yesterday for some milk, and, though I tried to draw her out on the subject, she pretended not to know anything about it."

"Well, well. I should not wait for an invitation, if I were you," repeated the Bumble-Bee; "I should go. And talking of going," he continued, turning to Roderick, "we must be off. What do you think of the milk?"

"Thank you, it's very nice," said the boy, who had been sipping from the tankard and finding the contents much to his liking.



"'I-I'M AFRAID I HAVEN'T ANY MONEY WITH ME,' STAMMERED RODERICK."

"Have some more?" said the Ant, hospitably.

Roderick finished up what he had, and shook his head. "No, thank you very much," he said. "I must be going with Mr. Bumble-Bee."

"Never say 'Mr.' to any insect, it's not considered good form," whispered the Bumble-Bee. "Well, good day, Ant," he continued, aloud; "I expect I shall see you at the garden party this afternoon, after all. I'm pretty sure to get an invitation."

"Good-bye, good-bye!" called out the Ant, going back to his pail. "We shall see."

The Bumble-Bee led the way, and Roderick followed, thinking over all the Ant had said. "I *should* like to go to the garden party," he said. "I expect it will be fun."

"Yes, they're very jolly affairs indeed. I was just wondering if I could get you an invitation. The Beetle always gets one, but is never able to use it, as he is on duty every day at the Hole in the Wall, which is the entrance to this place, as you know."

"What does he have to be there for?" asked Roderick.

"To see that the snakes don't crawl through," explained the Bumble-Bee. "You see, no one is allowed to come here except by permission of a committee of birds and animals, and they have unanimously agreed to exclude snakes of any kind. All of the other creatures have given their word not to injure or molest any other dweller here—but—er—any kind of a snake could never be trusted, so we all feel that the best thing to do is to keep them out altogether."

"Oh! so that's why the Beetle can never get away," said Roderick. "I see. Then why do the Butterflies send him an invitation if they know he cannot come?"

"It's to save his feelings," explained the Bumble-Bee. "He might feel slighted if he didn't get one. But here we are at my house at last. Where's my latch-key?"

The Bumble-Bee fumbled about in his pocket and at last found what he sought, and quickly opened the door. He had no sooner done so than a very shabbily-dressed female bee tried to brush past him. "Why, Apathi," he cried, sternly, "what is this? What have you been doing here?"

"Nothing, nothing! I assure you," replied Apathi, in a frightened voice.

"You've been laying eggs," cried the Bumble-Bee in an accusing voice, shaking a finger at her. "Now, admit it at once. It will be better for you."

"Well," said Apathi, beginning to cry, "I—I—*have*, then—because—because—I've no proper home of my own—and—I'm so poor I could never take care of it myself, and I know how kind you are, dear Bumble-Bee, and—and—it was only a little one, after all," she sobbed.

The Bumble-Bee looked very grave. "Are you *sure* there was only one, Apathi?" demanded the Bumble-Bee.

"Yes," said Apathi, wiping her eyes and speaking quite cheerfully. "There was only one—you see, I hadn't time to lay any more

because I heard you coming," she added, disingenuously.

The Bumble-Bee thought for a moment. "You may leave the egg here, Apathi," he said at last, "and my wife shall take care of it for you, but remember if ever I catch you here again you shall be punished. It is really disgracefully idle of you not to provide a home for yourself. There's *no* excuse. There's no reason why you should be poor. You have the same advantages here as other people. Now go!"

"Thank you, dear Bumble-Bee," murmured Apathi, edging to the door, and gathering her rags about her. She had no sooner got out, however, than she buzzed off, muttering quite audibly, "Stingy old thing. I wish I'd laid a dozen eggs in his house. He could well afford to look after them and bring up the young larvæ."

"Ah!" said the Bumble-Bee, shaking his head as the ungrateful Apathi flew away. "Poor relations are a great trouble at times. Now, *that's* a sort of relation of mine—a kind of second cousin twice removed—and she *will* come here whenever I'm out of the way and lay her eggs in my house, expecting *me* to look after them, just because she is too idle and thoughtless to make a home for herself. She's as bad an insect as the Cuckoo is a bird. But come in, come in. Here's my wife, and I'd like to introduce you to her."

The lady Bumble-Bee, who had just entered the hall, made a deep curtsy to Roderick and then turned to her husband. "My dear, this letter came about an hour ago by Express Blue-Bottle Post. I see it's marked 'Very Important.' Perhaps you'd like to open it at once."

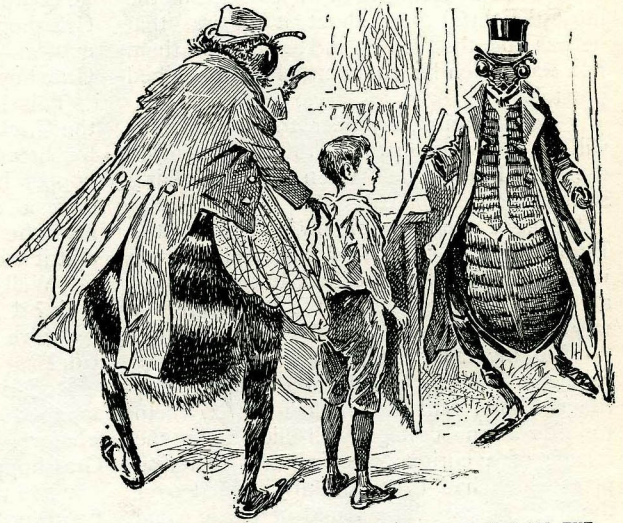
The Bumble-Bee did so. "Ah, ha!" he cried. "An invitation to the garden party, with apologies for its late delivery. Go, my dear, and put on your best dress at once—and I must change, too, I suppose, if I am to go."

A violent knock at the door startled them all. "It's only me," cried a crotchety voice, and the Beetle turned the handle and walked in. "I've just called to say that I believe after all he's a beast," he continued, pointing to Roderick, "and not an insect at all. I've been looking up the subject, and I find the fact of his not having a tail doesn't matter very much. The guinea-pig has scarcely any tail worth mentioning, and——"

"Is *that* all you've come to say?" interrupted the Bumble-Bee.

"Yes," said the Beetle, breathlessly, "and I ran all the way here in fear lest a snake should get through the Hole in the Wall during my absence, because I thought you would like to know, and——"

"You'd better run all the way back again at once," said the Bumble-Bee. "It doesn't matter in the least whether he's an insect or a beast, he seems a very decent chap, and I am quite enjoying taking him about, so don't trouble your head about it any more. Hurry back at once, or a snake *may* get in, and then where would you be? I'll be answerable for this young fellow, and—oh,



"IS THAT ALL YOU'VE COME TO SAY? YOU'D BETTER RUN ALL THE WAY BACK AGAIN AT ONCE," SAID THE BUMBLE-BEE.

yes—by the way, have you had an invitation to the garden party?"

"Yes," said the Beetle. "Why?"

"Are you going to use it?"

"Of course not," said the Beetle. "I never go—there's sure to be dancing, and—er—dancing doesn't suit me. You can have my ticket if you want it," and he brought it out of his pocket and gave it to the Bumble-Bee.

"Thanks, very much," said the Bumble-Bee.

"And now I must be off," declared the Beetle. "But remember," he said, scowling at Roderick, "I won't be answerable for *him*. He is as likely as not to turn out to be a beast."

"All right. Good-bye!" called out the Bumble-Bee, as the Beetle hurried off.

"And hooray!" shouted Roderick, excitedly, as the Bumble-Bee handed him the ticket. "I shall be able to go to the garden party after all."

CHAPTER III.

THE SNAKE'S TAIL.

THE Bumble-Bee's lady was soon ready to accompany them, and Mr. Bumble-Bee himself, having changed his dusty workaday clothes for a very handsome suit of brown and gold, declared that they had better be starting, as it was some little distance to the place where the garden party was to be held.

Roderick was all excitement, for it seemed such a novel experience to be going to a party the guests of which were all to be insects or tiny creatures of their size; and the most delightful part about it all was that he was able to talk with and understand them in a way which he could not have imagined possible.

"Do you think, my dear, that the Earwig will be well enough to be there?" inquired the lady Bumble-Bee, when they had fairly started.

"Ah, I scarcely know," replied the Bumble-Bee. "He was not feeling very well yesterday when I called, but able to get about on his crutches. We'll call on our way and inquire, shall we?"

"Do, my lady," said his wife, and a few moments later they had turned aside from the roadway, and Roderick followed them towards a tiny cottage, half hidden by the foliage of a curious creeping and flowering plant which had been carefully trained over the front porch. The sound of music came from within as they walked up the pathway of the little garden before it, and the Bumble-Bee and his wife exchanged glances.

"That sounds like the Cricket," declared the latter.

"It is; I should know his touch anywhere," declared the Bumble-Bee. "The Cricket and the Grasshopper; can't you hear the bass-viol?" He hurried to the door and gave a smart tap with the gold-headed cane which he carried, and the music immediately ceased. A second or two afterwards the door opened and a feeble-looking Earwig, walking with crutches, made his appearance.

"Why, bless me! How d'y' do, Bumble-Bee?" he cried, heartily. "And your good lady. Come in, come in. We're just practising a little trio for the bass-viol, the violin, and the triangle for the garden party this afternoon."

"Oh, you are coming, then?" said the lady

Bumble-Bee as they entered the cottage. "We were half afraid that you might not be well enough."

"Yes, yes, I shall be there," said the Earwig. "I had a most pressing invitation from the Butterflies, and was told to bring my music, so the Cricket and the Grasshopper and I are all going together. Who's your friend?" he whispered, nodding towards Roderick.

"Oh—a—er, well, in point of fact, a Boy," said the Bumble-Bee, in some confusion. "At least, he says so."

"Boy? Boy? Never heard the name before that I'm aware of. Funny-looking insect, isn't he? However, if he's a friend of yours he's heartily welcome. Gentlemen," he continued, addressing the Cricket and the Grasshopper, "a friend of the Bumble-Bee's, er—a—er, Boy; Boy—the Cricket, the Grasshopper."

This introduction having been performed, the Cricket, who had been humming under his breath, nodded slightly, and the Grasshopper bowed in a stiff manner. Roderick took a seat which the Earwig indicated, near the Grasshopper, and politely remarked that it was a fine day.

"Well, it's nothing to do with you if it is, is it?" the Grasshopper replied, crossly. "You've had nothing to do with it, have you?"

Roderick was quite distressed at being snapped up in this manner, and wondered whatever he could have done to offend the Grasshopper that he should be so irritable.

"I've no patience," continued the insect, "with people giving themselves such airs and laying claim to having a hand in everything that's done."

"I'm sure I'm very sorry," said Roderick; "I only just made the remark that it was a fine day."

"Well, I could see that without you telling me of it," snapped the Grasshopper; "but let's change the subject. *You're* not going to the garden party, of course?"

"Oh, yes, I am," said Roderick, smilingly. "Got a *proper* invitation?" asked the Grasshopper, looking at him suspiciously.

"Well—er—" stammered Roderick, "in point of fact I haven't. I—er—am going in place of the Beetle, who can't leave the gate, and—"

"Are you a beetle?" demanded the Grasshopper.

"No, of course not," laughed Roderick; "only you see—"

"I do not," interrupted the Grasshopper,

"I do not see that you have any right to go at all unless you were invited; what do you say, Cricket?"

"Eh? what's that?" said the Cricket, who was rather deaf.

"He's going to the party as a beetle," said the Grasshopper.

"It's not a fancy-dress party, is it?" remarked the Cricket. "Why doesn't he go as himself?"

"He isn't asked."

"Then why does he go at all?"

"Curiosity," declared the Grasshopper; "nothing but pure curiosity. If it wasn't for offending the Bumble-Bee, who seems to be a friend of his, I'd tell the Butterflies myself that he is not what he pretends to be. As it is, I shall take an early opportunity of warning the Bumble-Bee against picking up indiscriminate acquaintances of this sort. It's bound to lead him into trouble."

Roderick began to feel very angry with these two unfriendly insects, and was quite relieved when the Bumble-Bee, who, with the lady Bumble-Bee, had been talking to the Earwig in another part of the room, suggested that it was time for them to be going on.

"Well, good - bye for the present; we'll see you later on," said the Earwig, bowing them from the door. "Good - bye, good-bye."

"Pleasant person, the Earwig," declared the Bumble-Bee, as they hurried along.

"Very," agreed his wife.

"Dear me! what's that? Oh!" and her bonnet went flying off into the dust, while a great sprawling spider landed on the ground just in front of them.

He gathered himself together and raised his top hat, which had, curiously enough, not fallen from his head. "Ten thousand pardons!" he exclaimed. "Very clumsy of me, I'm afraid, but these cobwebs are such uncertain things in windy weather. I had no intention, though, I assure you, of landing so near to you."

"Oh, don't mention it," said the lady Bumble-Bee, carefully brushing the dust from the bonnet, which her husband handed

her. "I know you couldn't help it. I'm sure I think it's very clever of you to travel in the way you do at all. This is the Gossamer Spider," she continued, addressing Roderick. "He has a most ingenious method of travelling. He has no wings, as you observe, but climbs to the branches of a tree, or some such place, spins a long web, and drops down, leaving the wind to carry him as far as it will in the direction in which he wishes to go."

"It has its disadvantages," sighed the Gossamer Spider, "if the wind is blowing



"WE'RE JUST PRACTISING A LITTLE TRIO FOR THE BASS-VIOL, THE VIOLIN, AND THE TRIANGLE."

in the wrong direction; also, people object to the cobwebs being blown across their faces, as they are occasionally. But have you heard the news?"

"No," said the Bumble-Bee. "What?"

"It's rumoured that there's a snake in the grass," said the Spider, looking about apprehensively. "I overheard your cousin the Wasp telling a Ladybird about it only ten minutes ago."

"You don't say so?" said the Bumble-Bee.

"Fact, I assure you," declared the Spider. "The Wasp says that the Beetle was *not* in his place by the Hole in the Wall an hour or two since, and she distinctly saw *something* crawl through the Wall and hurry off into the grass. She spoke to the Beetle about it, and he seemed terribly upset, and made her promise not to tell anyone. Of course, she didn't mind telling *me*; she knew that *I* wouldn't repeat it. But excuse me, there's the Cockchafer. I want to have a word with



"TEN THOUSAND PARDONS! VERY CLUMSY OF ME, I'M AFRAID."

him. Good day," and the Gossamer Spider raised his hat again and hurried off.

"This sounds rather serious," said the Bumble-Bee, thoughtfully, as they walked on; "if there is really a snake here it will mean trouble by and by."

"Perhaps, my dear—you know how fond our cousin the Wasp is of exaggeration—it may not have been a snake at all, but only a—"

There was a curious-looking mound in the middle of the roadway a little ahead of them, and at this instant a head with two horns and

a long, snake-like body appeared from behind it. The lady Bumble-Bee screamed and nervously clutched at her husband's arm, and then, an instant later, burst out laughing. "How foolish of me, to be sure!" she exclaimed; "of course, it's only the Snail. I really thought for the moment that it was the Snake. Glad to see you're coming to the party," she cried, hurrying up and nodding to the Snail.

"Oh—yes—I—shall—be—there," declared that creature, speaking very deliberately. "I—started—four—days—ago. Do—you—think—I—shall—be—in—time?"

"Why, yes," said the Bumble-Bee, "here we are. I can see the gates quite distinctly over the top of the grass."

"Well—don't—wait—for—me," said the Snail, patiently crawling along. "Tell—them—I'm—coming."

And the Bumble-Bee and his wife, with Roderick, hurried along, and soon stood before the big gates leading to the Butterflies' Park.

They were admitted by a Daddy Long-Legs, who took their invitation cards, and gave them a searching glance as they passed in.

"There's something wrong here," Roderick heard him mutter. "I've never seen a Beetle like *that* before." And the poor boy began to feel rather uncomfortable.

"However, I'm here, and that's the great thing," he mused, and was just turning to look about him, when he heard a rustle and commotion, and a most gaily-dressed Butterfly stood before him.

"So pleased to see you," she said, daintily offering the tips of her fingers; "so very good of you to come." And with a smile and

a little nod she was off, repeating precisely the same words to the Bumble-Bee and his lady.

"That's the last we shall see of her, I expect," said the Bumble-Bee. "She just has time to speak to each guest and that's all."

He was mistaken, however, for the Butterfly whisked herself back again. "Are you engaged for the next dance?" she asked Roderick abruptly, and, without waiting for a reply, caught hold of him and he felt himself whirled round and round over the somewhat rough ground into the midst of a throng

of Moths, Beetles, Dragon-Flies, Butterflies, and insects of all sorts and sizes.

Breathless and bewildered he just clung to the Butterfly and let her whirl him where she would, and when at last she did stop he sank down on a tuft of moss, exhausted.

"Delightful dance, wasn't it?" asked the Butterfly, who did not seem in the very least disturbed by her exertions. "So dreamy and languid."

"Dear me!" panted Roderick. "I thought it was awful. Oh, I beg your pardon, I mean, of course, yes, it was delightful."

The Butterfly laughed lightly, and raised her glasses, through which she glanced at Roderick. "You are a funny insect," she said. "I'm afraid you don't appreciate dancing as you should."

"I—I'm not used to this kind of dancing," declared Roderick.

"There's no other kind that I know of," declared the Butterfly; "but life's too short to argue. Have another turn?"

"I—er—really—I'm afraid——" began Roderick.

"Oh, never mind, if you don't want to," chimed in the Butterfly; "here's the dear Earwig, crutches and all, and the Cricket and the Grasshopper. You dear creatures, so good of you to come, and to bring your music," and she hurried up to them and greeted the three most effusively.

Roderick felt quite relieved at getting away from his gushing hostess, and walked away to where some Cockchafers and other insects were playing some orchestral music very well indeed. The grounds were crowded with gaily-dressed creatures, all evidently having a very good time, and Roderick quite enjoyed himself watching the various insects pass and repass. No one took the slightest notice of him for some time, till presently he heard a sound like a small child crying, and beheld, a little way off, a Caterpillar in a sailor's hat and jacket, weeping as though his heart would break.

"Why, what's the matter?" cried Roderick, kindly; "don't cry. Be a man."

The Caterpillar left off crying, and looked up at him in surprise. "Be a what?" he asked.

"Oh, I forgot. Be a—a—an insect, I suppose I ought to have said."

"Well, I *am* an insect," declared the Caterpillar; "I wish I wasn't, I'm sure."

"What were you crying about?" inquired Roderick.

"I've lost my ma!" said the Caterpillar, sniffing again.

"Well—well—never mind. You'll soon find her again, I expect; what is she like?"

"She's a Butterfly," declared the Caterpillar; "and I sha'n't see her any more, and even if I did she said she should never recognise me in public again. That's the worst of having such a vain parent."

"But why? Why won't she acknowledge you?"

"Because I'm ugly," sobbed the Caterpillar, "and not like her. But I don't care," he added, recklessly. "I'm going to be a



"HAVE ANOTHER TURN?"

Chrysalis and live in a cocoon, and then I sha'n't care whether I'm an orphan or not."

Roderick had been so interested in what the Caterpillar had been saying that he had not noticed what had suddenly taken place in the park, namely, that everyone was rushing in one direction, evidently in a state of great excitement. He thought that he had better go and see what was the matter, and was just starting to go when he saw his old friend, the Beetle, hurrying towards him.

"Oh, here you are," was the greeting which that not altogether amiable insect gave him.

"A pretty mess you've got me into now."

"What do you mean?" asked Roderick.

"Why, all through you I left my post at the Hole in the Wall for a few rainutes—just while I went to the Bumble-Bee's to warn him against you—and when I returned I found that the Wasp had invented some cock and bull story about a snake having got through in my absence, and I thought I'd better come and put it right at once. So I've got a friend—a sick Tarantula—to take my place for an hour or two, and so here I am. What's going on over there—there seems some excitement on?"

"I was just going to see myself," remarked Roderick.

"Come along, then," said the Beetle, leading the way. Roderick hurried after him, and was surprised to see that their approach apparently excited the crowd more than ever.

"He's an impostor," declared several voices, loudly.

"An insect, indeed! Why, he hasn't enough legs. No well-connected insect has less than six legs," said one or two others.

"And no wings," shouted a particularly angry-looking Dor-Bug. "Not a wing to his back." They were evidently referring to him, and Roderick began to feel very uncomfortable.

"And," screamed a voice, louder than all the others, "it was all through him that the

Beetle let the snake through the Wall. It's *disgraceful!*" And Roderick could see that the Cricket, the Grasshopper, and the Wasp were haranguing the others and saying all sorts of things about him.

"Here is the Beetle," shouted someone; "now we shall get at the whole truth," and the entire crowd came surging towards them.

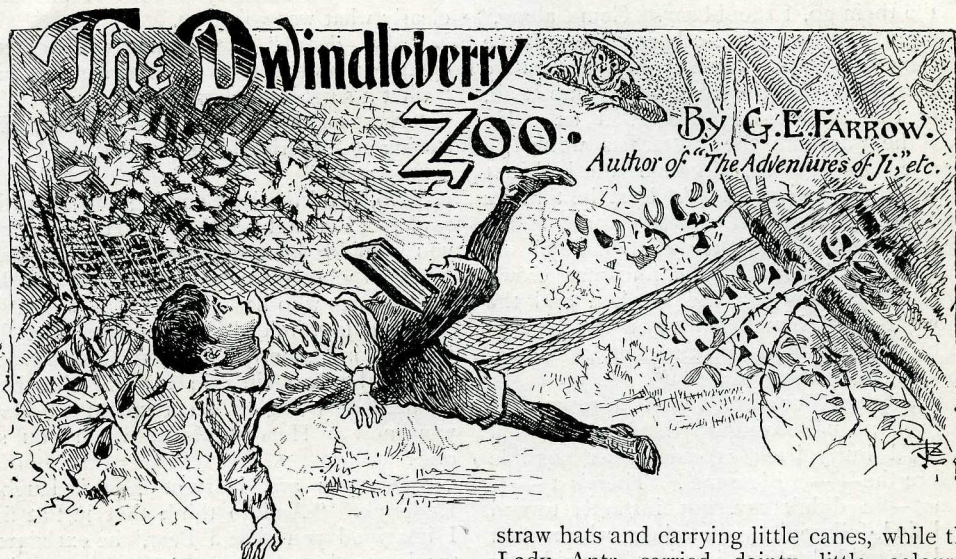
The Butterfly hostess with a number of her relatives came first, and the angry guests surrounded her, glaring at Roderick in a most embarrassing manner. "Beetle," said the Butterfly, "what is this creature—is he an insect or not?"

The Beetle shook his head. "I have my doubts," he said. "I told the Bumble-Bee he was a beast, and beast he is, I'll be bound."

"Look! look at his hands!" cried someone; "*they're growing!*" He is a beast, he is a beast."

Roderick looked down at his hands, and noticed, to his dismay, that they really had grown in a most remarkable manner, till they were now about four times as large as they ought to have been to be in accordance with his size. At the same time the insects one and all began hurriedly to take their departure, and in a very few moments Roderick found himself alone.

(To be continued.)



SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

COMMENCED LAST MONTH.

RODERICK was lying in a hammock in a garden near the Zoo, reading a book on Natural History. A Monkey looks over the wall and invites him to visit the Dwindleberry Zoo. The Monkey gives him a dwindleberry, which makes him so tiny that he can creep through a very small hole behind the ivy. A Beetle is the door-keeper, and his main task seems to be to keep out a Snake, for all the creatures in the Dwindleberry Zoo are under a vow not to harm one another, and the Snake cannot be trusted. After many adventures Roderick goes to a Butterflies' garden party. There comes a rumour that a Snake has got through the Hole in the Wall, and, moreover, Roderick suddenly begins to grow again. The party breaks up in confusion.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GUINEA-PIG'S TAIL.

RODERICK gazed about him in dismay. Why had all of the insects fled? And what was happening to him?

He felt that he was growing taller and taller, and indeed he could see, by the surrounding objects, that he was now nearly four times the height that he had been only a few moments before.

The growth had begun with his hands and feet, which for some seconds had been totally out of proportion to the rest of his body, but now the other parts of his anatomy had grown too, till he seemed another Roderick altogether; so that a long stream of Ants coming towards him in the distance appeared quite tiny in comparison with those he had seen at the Ants' Dairy Farm.

To his surprise, however, he found that the very Ant whom he had seen there when he visited the sheds with the Bumble-Bee was leading the procession, and that he and most of the other male Ants were wearing

straw hats and carrying little canes, while the Lady Ants carried dainty little coloured parasols and bouquets of flowers.

The Ant seemed to be a little worried, and looked about him vaguely while the others of the party clustered about him, and were evidently demanding an explanation about something or another.

"It's no use at all worrying *me*," Roderick heard him say, in a weary voice. "I can't tell you at all what has happened. I'll ask this Frog," and he hurried towards where Roderick was standing. "Oh, I beg your pardon, Frog," he began, raising his hat politely, "but would you please tell me if——"

"Are you talking to me?" laughed Roderick. "Because I'm not a Frog, you know."

"Oh, it really doesn't matter what you are," said the Ant, impatiently. "You're something of that sort, I can see—but what I want to know is where the Butterflies' garden party is being held. I understood that it was to have been held here."

"I fancy it's all over," replied Roderick. "The guests one and all left very suddenly a few minutes ago."

"Over?" cried the Ant, in dismay. "Why, it was to have lasted all the afternoon, and there were to have been illuminations and fireworks in the evening. You must be mistaken, surely?"

"Oh, no! It's really over, I think," said Roderick. "There was something said about a snake having got through the Hole in the Wall, and that seemed to frighten everybody away almost at once."

The Ant started nervously. "A snake!"

he cried. "You don't say so! Enough to make them go, I should say. Come along," he said, addressing the others, "we must be getting back, too. Such a pity, just as we had arrived. We shouldn't have come at all, only the Bumble-Bee persuaded us. He said he was sure the Butterflies would be pleased to see us, although we had not received an invitation. At least he told *me* so, and, of course, I couldn't come alone, and so I have brought the whole family."

Roderick looked at the immense crowd of Ants surrounding the speaker, and the thought struck him that really it was perhaps rather a good thing for the Butterflies that the party *had* been broken up.

"But there," continued the Ant, resignedly, "it's of no use saying anything more about it, we'll hurry back as quickly as possible before the—— Bless me! There's a——" What—he didn't say, but instantly turned and fled, followed by the others, who rushed and scrambled about in disorder, evidently in a state of great fear and excitement.

For a moment Roderick could see nothing to account for this commotion, but presently he saw two big eyes and a furry head amongst the big trees (as he thought them) to the right of where he was standing. "It's a Bear," he thought in alarm, as he hurriedly looked about for some means of escape. The creature, however, *whatever* it was, was certainly not a Bear.

To Roderick's great surprise it ran lightly up the smooth trunk of one of the tall "trees," assisting itself with its long thin tail, which it wound around the trunk as it mounted higher and higher till it reached a kind of round nest nearly at the top.

It then called out something in a shrill voice and another creature of the same species popped a head over the nest and handed out first of all a little bundle in a long white gown and then another, finally getting out of the nest itself and sliding quickly down the trunk of the tree to the ground.

The other, with the two bundles in its arms, descended more slowly and carefully. "Where is the perambulator?" he demanded, when he reached the ground.

"I am getting it, my love," was the answer, and the one who had first reached the ground returned, to Roderick's great surprise, from a little cluster of shrubs near by, wheeling a neat double perambulator, into which the other carefully placed the two white bundles.

Roderick's curiosity got the better of him,

and he went carefully forward to see more clearly what was going on.

"My dear!" exclaimed one of the creatures, immediately catching sight of him, "what a singular-looking Frog."

"Nonsense!" remarked the other, after staring at Roderick for a moment. "It's not a Frog at all."

"No," said the boy, coming forward with a smile, "I'm not—and I can't think why you should have imagined such a thing. You're the second creature within the last ten minutes who has——"

"Creature, indeed!" interrupted the first speaker, indignantly. "What impertinence! That's the first time in my life I've been insulted by being called a creature. Don't you know a Harvest-Mouse when you see one?"

"Oh, you are Harvest-Mice," laughed Roderick. "And to think that just at first I imagined you were a Bear," he exclaimed, turning to the other one. "Of course, I had forgotten for the moment how tiny I am now."

"How tiny you are now?" repeated the Harvest-Mouse. "What *do* you mean? Aren't you your proper size, then? What's the matter with you?"

"Well, you see," explained Roderick, as well as he was able to, "I *used* to be ever and ever so much bigger. I'm a boy, you know, and——"

"My dear, come away, he's dangerous!" cried the other Harvest-Mouse, hurriedly grabbing the handle of the perambulator; "let's get away while the dear infants are safe. I've heard of boys before. I wonder however he managed to get in here." And the two hurried off, chattering excitedly, and carefully wheeling the perambulator out of sight.

Roderick felt half inclined to go after them and assure them that there was no cause for alarm, and he would have done so, but just at that instant he heard a very curious sound in the opposite direction from that which they had taken. On looking to see where it came from, he beheld a curious animal bounding towards him in a series of long jumps. "A kangaroo," decided he at once. "I'm glad of that; I've never seen one before. I hope *he* won't be frightened of me."

The creature, whatever it was, seemed to be very anxious about the time, for Roderick saw him take his watch out of his pocket several times before he reached the spot where he was standing.

"Am I in time?" he panted, as he hurried up, breathless and over-heated.

"For what?" inquired Roderick.

"The new Seaside and Switchback Railway," was the reply. "Have the Guinea-Pig and the Chameleon arrived yet?"

"I've not seen them," said Roderick. "The only ones I've seen here are the Harvest-Mice and their two babies."

There was a sigh of relief, and the creature took a card-case from his pocket. "You may know my name, sir," he said. "I'm the Jerboa, from Egypt. I've been asked to join a party to the seaside this afternoon. The Guinea-Pig is going to take us all. Isn't it nice of him? We are to meet here."

"To the seaside!" exclaimed Roderick. "However are you going to get there?"

The Jerboa raised his eyebrows in surprise. "Don't you know?" he inquired. "Why, by the New Switchback Line, of course. The Guinea-Pig has been made director of the Company, and there is to be a trial trip. But here he comes to speak for himself."

A very prosperous-looking Guinea-Pig at this moment made his appearance through the trees, wearing a top hat and gloves, and carrying a gold-headed umbrella under his arm. "Ah! Here we are," he remarked, breezily. "Well to time, you see. Fine day for our journey. Good-day to you, sir," he added, bowing politely to Roderick; "very pleased to meet any friend of the Jerboa's."

"He's scarcely a friend yet," said the Jerboa. "I've only just met him here. I don't even know his name."

"Roderick is my name," said the boy.

"H'm! What is a Roderick exactly?" said the Jerboa, doubtfully. "I don't seem to have heard of such a creature before, somehow."

"Oh, no, that's only my name, you know," laughed Roderick. "I'm *really* a b——" Boy he was going to say, but remembered just in time how he had alarmed the Harvest-Mice by admitting this fact, so he altered his mind and said, "I'm just an animal, you know."

"Really!" said the Jerboa, somewhat suspiciously. "What have you done with your tail?"



"MY DEAR, COME AWAY, HE'S DANGEROUS!"

"I—I'm afraid I haven't one," stammered Roderick.

"Well, well, don't you worry about that, sir," said the Guinea-Pig, cheerily. "I've none to speak of, and really it doesn't seem to matter much one way or another what you're called. For instance, I'm called a Guinea-Pig, but between ourselves I'm neither one nor the other. They call me Guinea, because I'm supposed to get a guinea every time we have a board meeting of the Company of which I am a director—but lor! bless you, I've never seen one yet, and as for being a pig, you can *see* I'm not that. Then some folks call me a quadruped, whatever that may mean, but if they turned it about and called me a Guinea-ped or a Quadru-pig, I should be just as happy. But here come the rest of the party. The Mole has made himself a swell."

Two other creatures just then hurried up. One was a Chameleon in a sage green coat, tan gloves, and a straw hat; the other a Mole in a heavy motor coat and goggles.

"You'll join us, of course," said the Guinea-Pig, addressing Roderick. "We're just going to have a little run down to the

seaside—or rather, what we call the seaside. You see,” he explained, “we’ve a very clever engineer here in the Mole, and he has constructed a tunnel on the plan of a switch-back to another part of the grounds, where we have a kind of artificial lake filled with salt water from the tanks of the other Zoo, and we call this the seaside. There’s a young fellow there to whom I should like to

it’s a great secret which is only known to our family, and nothing would ever persuade one of us to divulge it.”

The Jerboa was again looking at his watch, of which he was evidently very proud. “Isn’t it about time to start?” he asked. “We shall be losing the best part of the day if we are not careful.”

“Yes, you’re right,” agreed the Mole; “let’s be off.”

The Guinea-Pig linked his arm in Roderick’s, and, the Chameleon joining the other two, they were soon journeying through the “forest.”

“What funny trees these are,” remarked Roderick, as they walked along. “I don’t think I have ever seen any like them before.”

“Trees!” exclaimed the Guinea-Pig; “they’re not trees. This is a cornfield. Trees are ever so much bigger.”

“Dear me, of course,” said Roderick, suddenly remembering. “I am always forgetting how small I am. Why I actually imagined the Harvest-Mouse was a bear, and thought that the Jerboa was a kangaroo.”

“Have you ever been any bigger, then?” inquired the Guinea-Pig, curiously. “You seem to be a strange sort of animal. What are you exactly?

A kind of frog?”

“Frog? No,” cried Roderick. “How you do all keep on taking me for a frog.”

“You’re rather like one,” said the Guinea-Pig, reflectively, “in appearance, at any rate. What are you really?”

Roderick told him exactly who he was, and how he came to be there.

“Ah, I see,” remarked the Guinea-Pig, “exactly how it is, now. It’s the dwindle-berry that has done it all. I’ve heard about them before. You’ll keep on growing now, by fits and starts, till you reach your proper height again. I should be careful, though, about letting anybody know that you’re a boy. There’s a prejudice against boys, somehow, amongst the animals. Personally, I have no reason to dislike them. I was kept by a small boy once in his locker at school, and I must say he was a decent little chap, and treated me rather well, except that he would come and take me out of the locker when his hands were all sticky with sweets and things, and it used to take me an



“AH! HERE WE ARE,” HE REMARKED.”

introduce you. The Fishing-Frog! Ever heard of him?”

Roderick shook his head.

“Ah! you’ll like him, he’s a kind of freak too, like yourself—that is, he doesn’t quite know what he is. They call him a frog, but he’s no more like a frog than I am.”

The Chameleon was looking anxiously up at the sky. “It’s going to rain, I fancy, before long,” he said. “I shall spoil this green coat, I’m afraid. I’d better change it before we start.” And he pressed one of the buttons lightly.

Immediately, to Roderick’s great surprise, his coat changed colour, and became a sombre brown in place of the rather light green which it had previously been.

“Ingenious, isn’t it?” said the Chameleon, smiling.

“Ingenious? I should think it was,” cried Roderick, admiringly. “However did you do it?”

“Ah,” laughed the Chameleon, “a good many people would like to know that, but

awful while to get myself clean again. But here we are at the station."

The "station" was, so far as Roderick could see, only a high mound of earth with a big board stuck on the top, bearing these words:—

DWINDLEBERRY ZOO STATION.

SEASIDE AND SWITCHBACK RAILWAY, LIMITED.

FREQUENT TRAINS.

READ THE BY-LAWS.

They waited a few moments for the others, and then, pushing their way through some wooden doors, they found themselves inside the Mound. All that Roderick could see for the moment was a large bare hall with a black-looking tunnel in the distance, and a number of framed notices on the walls.

He was just looking at one of these, and had ascertained that no one was allowed to carry pets with them on the line "under a penalty not exceeding forty shillings," when he heard a loud toot! toot! like a motor horn, and a curious little car, like those in use on an ordinary switchback, drew into the station. It held six, but immediately they had got into it (the Mole having taken it in charge) the Jerboa blew a blare on the horn—toot! toot!—and they were off.

It was just like an ordinary switchback, except that their way continued all through a dark tunnel, and that the car rattled and shook rather more than usual. Roderick was somewhat relieved to find that there were glow-worms posted at various intervals to give them a little light, and so they proceeded up hill and down dale for some time in silence and clinging to the sides of the car, till suddenly they emerged into the sunlight, and after running quickly up a steep incline they came to a sudden stop, and the whole party was shot violently out of the car and over a barrier on to the soft sand on the other side.

CHAPTER V.

THE LOBSTER'S TAIL.

"THERE!" exclaimed the Guinea-Pig, beaming upon Roderick as he sat rubbing himself and feeling rather dazed after the very sudden termination of the journey through the tunnel. "What do you think of that?"

"Was it an accident?" inquired the boy.

"Accident!" cried the Guinea-Pig. "Certainly not. Why, that's the best thing of all about the new railway. We call it 'bumping the bump.' You see, it causes such a lot of fun and amusement at the end

of the trip and makes you forget the fatigues of the journey."

"It's very bad for the tail," grumbled the Chameleon. "I believe I've dislocated mine, or got a stitch in it, or something; anyhow, it's very painful."

"One of the advantages of not *having* a tail," whispered the Guinea-Pig to Roderick; "if you haven't one you can't dislocate it, eh?"

However, the Chameleon's tail soon got better, and they picked themselves up and strolled down to the artificial "seaside," which was crowded by a number of creatures who evidently belonged to the place.

A motherly-looking Crab, in a shawl and bonnet, had brought several of her family, who, dressed in little bathing garments, were paddling in the water, and building sand castles on the shore with the aid of little wooden spades and tin pails.

Two or three Starfish were wobbling about, arm-in-arm, rather uncertainly, and being jeered at by a very rude Sea-Urchin. A Hermit-Crab stood at the door of his house, half in and half out of his shell, while an amiable Lobster, a pipe in one hand and a newspaper in the other, sat on a rock, reading aloud to three or four Oysters, who were lying in their beds at the edge of the water.

"I think I'll be off and see if I can find the Fishing-Frog," declared the Guinea-Pig, looking about him somewhat anxiously. "I have something important to tell him."

"I'll come with you, if I may," said the Mole, who had taken off his goggles and unbuttoned his heavy fur overcoat.

"May I stop with you?" asked the Chameleon, taking Roderick by the arm. "My tail still feels a little weak, and I'm afraid to try it by walking far."

"You don't walk on your tail, do you?" objected the Guinea-Pig.

"No, but I have to hold it up when I walk and the strain is——"

"Oh, well, just as you please," said the Guinea-Pig; "we'll be off. Come along, Mole," and the two turned around by the rocks and were soon out of sight.

"I wonder what the news is," said the Chameleon, staring at the Lobster, who was waving his pipe about frantically as he read aloud what was evidently an exciting piece of information, for the Oysters had raised themselves nearly out of their beds and were gazing at him with half-opened mouths and with evident interest.

"Perhaps he wouldn't mind if we went

over and listened," said Roderick, who was feeling rather curious about the matter himself.

"I don't suppose he would," remarked the Chameleon. "At any rate, let's go over and see."

"All right," agreed Roderick, and together the Chameleon and he strolled over towards the part of the shore where the Lobster was sitting.

"There is every reason to suppose that the Snake entered through the Hole in the Wall," he read, loudly and excitedly, so that the two could hear him distinctly, "during the absence of the Beetle, who had gone away for a few minutes on business connected with a creature calling himself a Boy, whatever that may be. The Snake is supposed to have eaten a dwindleberry before entering, as he is known to have grown considerably since he has been this side of the Wall. The animals, birds, and insects are all very indignant, and are looking for the creature calling himself a Boy, as they consider that it was entirely his fault that the Beetle was away



"THE CHAMELEON AND HE STROLLED OVER TO WHERE THE LOBSTER WAS SITTING."

from his post at the time. It is feared that the Snake may turn out to be a Cobra, or even something worse."

"Augh!" shuddered one of the Oysters. "It makes me feel creepy all down the spine."

"Nonsense! You haven't got one," declared a Cuttlefish, who was resting half in and half out of the water, with his arms folded on a flat stone near by.

"Yah! neither have you!" taunted the Oyster.

"Don't presume to talk to me, you flabby, invertebrate mollusc!" cried the Cuttlefish, in a fury.

"Hush, hush!" protested the Lobster. "Pray be careful of your language. I'm shocked!"

"Well, he shouldn't be cheeky to me, then," said the Cuttlefish, sulkily.

"There, there! Say no more about it," advised the Lobster. "There's quite enough to worry about without quarrelling. This Snake that has somehow got into the grounds is sure to mean mischief; it's the only creature that can't be trusted to keep its word. You see, *we've* all of us sworn not to injure or molest any other inhabitant of the Dwindleberry Zoo, but if this Snake takes it into his ugly head to make a meal of any of us, you may be sure he'll not hesitate to do it. I declare we're not safe for a minute on dry land. I think I'll be getting back into the sea."

"S-s-s-supposing," stammered one of the Oysters, his shell chattering with fright, "s-s-supposing he should turn out to be a Sea-Serpent?"

"Don't!" shuddered the Cuttlefish. "Don't suggest such horrible things. I declare you make me feel quite alarmed. I'm off! Good-bye!" And he discharged a lot of dark-coloured fluid from his body, so that the water about him became almost inky-black, then, loosing his hold from the stone, he slid down into the darkness and was immediately hidden from sight.

"Highly-strung nervous temperament," said the Lobster. "Poor fellow! he's very sensitive and easily frightened; still, the outlook is rather alarming, certainly. Now, if I had that Boy here, I should have something to say to him. I wonder if——"

"Oh, oh!" suddenly screamed one of the Oysters, scrambling quite out of its bed in alarm. "Here it comes, here it comes!"

"What? what?" cried the others, anxiously.

"The Sea-Serpent," declared the Oyster, redoubling its efforts to get out on to the shore.

The Lobster shaded his eyes with one claw and looked out to sea, where Roderick and the Chameleon—who had been listening all this time in silence—could perceive rather a large black object slowly swimming towards them.

Presently the creature raised a very mild-looking head, surmounted by a cricket cap, from the water, and, giving a hasty glance along the beach, made directly for the spot where the Lobster was sitting. The Lobster hastily dropped his paper and scrambled down from the rock, but before he could get away a very meek voice came from the sea, saying, "Let me have a look at the paper when you have finished with it, please."

"Bless me," cried the Lobster, giving a sigh of relief, "it isn't the Sea-Serpent at all, it's only my old friend the Conger-Eel. Come ashore!" he shouted, "and you shall have it with pleasure."

The Oysters, greatly pacified, went back to their beds, and the Conger-Eel was soon on the beach, half in and half out of the water.

"We thought you were the Sea-Serpent," laughed the Lobster.

"Sea-Serpent!" exclaimed the Conger-Eel, in surprise. "Why, there isn't such a thing. At least, not in the Dwindleberry Zoo. Serpents of all kinds are forbidden to——"

"Yes, yes, we know all about that," cried the Lobster, impatiently, "but you just listen to this," and he read out from the paper the news he had previously communicated to the others.

"Dear me! That's very awkward," commented the Conger-Eel, when he had finished. "But, however, in any case it's not likely to be a Sea-Serpent, and so we need none of us be greatly alarmed. You see, if it's only a land snake, it won't molest us in the sea, and—halloa! what's the matter with the Frog, I wonder?" This because at that moment a Frog came in sight with a handkerchief over her head, sadly wiping her eyes upon her apron. She had evidently been weeping bitterly.

"Poor thing!" cried Roderick, getting up and walking towards her. "What is the matter? Is there anything that I can do?"

The Frog shook her head mournfully. "No, no," she sighed. "They've gone! No more for ever! my poor beautiful Tadpoles!"

"There, there, don't cry," said Roderick, sympathetically, while the Lobster and the Chameleon came up to learn what was the matter.

"I was only gone a few minutes," sobbed the Frog, "and to think that when I came back they should all have been gone but one."

"Tadpoles are you talking of, ma'am?" inquired the Chameleon. "What had become of them?"

The Frog shook her head. "I can't think," she said. "All I can get out of the one that is left is that they were eaten. He can't talk yet, you know, but when I ask him where his little brothers and sisters have gone, he just points down his throat, to tell me that someone has swallowed them."

"Do Snakes eat Tadpoles?" whispered the Chameleon to Roderick, behind his hand.

"I don't know. I fancy so," was the reply. "I know they eat Frogs."

"I believe, then, that the Snake who got through the Wall has eaten this one's Tadpoles."

"Eh?" said the Lobster, trying to catch what was said.

The Chameleon repeated his suspicions, and the Lobster thought for a moment, then exclaimed, "I believe you're right!" He made a few further inquiries of the Frog, and then told her what they feared.

"Oh dear me, yes!" said she. "Now you tell me there are Snakes about I can quite understand. Oh! why!—why!—didn't I know before?"

"We none of us knew till just now, ma'am," said the Lobster, "and we were just discussing the matter as you came up. I'm very sorry your poor Tadpoles should have been the first victims, though."

Just then there was a loud bump and another of the little switchback cars had evidently arrived.

Several small creatures shot up into the air and alighted—more or less alarmed and hurt, and to their own great surprise—on the sand, a few yards from where the others stood.

"More excursionists," said the Lobster, looking at them rather disdainfully. "This Switchback Railway will be the ruin of this place, I'm afraid. It brings such a mixed lot of people together."

The excursionists, who numbered about twenty, and included several small birds besides animals and insects, soon hurried down to the shore, which now began to present quite an animated appearance, and only one or two of them came to join the little party round the Frog. Amongst them were a Robin and a Sparrow, who were twittering excitedly as they hopped up together. "Have you heard the news?" they inquired, importantly.

"No! What is it?" asked the others.

"It is now believed, at least by the Insects and one or two others, that that Boy, as he calls himself, who came into the Zoo through the Hole in the Wall, brought the Snake in



"BOYS DON'T LAY EGGS."

with him. He has been behaving disgracefully himself ever since he came here, and has offended no end of people. He left an egg in the Bumble-Bee's house, and——"

"Boys don't lay eggs," interrupted the Chameleon.

"This one did, then," maintained the Robin, hotly. "I had the story direct from the Bumble-Bee's wife. She had been out for a short while, and when she came back *someone* had left an egg there which didn't belong to her, and who else could it have been? However, she declares she shall not bring up the larvæ with her own; there's no knowing what it may turn out to be."

"Then, besides," chimed in the Sparrow, who had taken off his things and was having a sand bath in the light dry sand, "he made himself very objectionable at the Earwig's, and quarrelled frightfully with the Grasshopper and the Cricket."

"He went to the Butterflies' garden party without an invitation, and carried on *disgracefully* there—in fact, he broke up the party," pursued the Robin. "The Wasp, who never could bear him from the first, told me all about it."

"He seems to be a very bad character," said the Lobster. "What's he like? Has anyone seen him?"

Nobody seemed to have done so.

"I've heard he hasn't a tail," ventured the Chameleon, "and that he has been mistaken for a Frog."

"That's nothing," said the Sparrow, getting up at last from his sand bath and brushing the loose sand from his feathers with his pocket-handkerchief. "They mistook him for an Insect first of all, only he behaved in such an extraordinary manner and carried on so, growing very suddenly out of all proportion, and all that sort of thing, that they knew he couldn't possibly be a real insect."

"By the way," said the Lobster, suddenly addressing Roderick, "*you* haven't a tail. And now I come to look at you, you are something like a deformed Frog."

I should like to know exactly what you happen to be?"

"I," exclaimed Roderick, turning rather red, "I—I'm just an Animal."

"Oh," remarked the Lobster in an unconvinced voice, "what kind of an animal? What do they call you?"

"Er—Roderick," said the boy, desperately.

"Never heard of such a thing," declared the Robin.

"Don't believe there is such a thing," remarked the Sparrow.

"Look here, I'll tell you what it is," said the Frog, who had been staring rather intently at Roderick for some time; "I believe that he is the very Boy they are looking for, and if so he knows all about my poor Tadpoles. Where are they?" she cried, appealing to Roderick. "What has the Snake done with them?"

Roderick protested, to the best of his ability, that he knew nothing whatever about the matter, but with no avail. The Frog had got it firmly fixed in her mind that he was the Boy, and the others seemed to think with her in the matter.

"That's all nonsense," said the Chameleon,

unexpectedly coming to his assistance; "he's a friend of the Guinea-Pig. You know how particular *he* is. And as for having no tail, I'm sure that doesn't matter in the least; at the best of times the Guinea-Pig himself only has a very tiny one."

"No, you're right there," said the Sparrow, "and, as for thinking he had anything to do with the disappearance of the Tadpoles, it is preposterous. Why, I saw your eldest Tadpole eating the others myself early this afternoon, and looking remarkably pleased with himself into the bargain."

"Now's your time to get away," whispered a voice in Roderick's ear; "if you wait longer they'll probably get to know more about you than you care for." And Roderick, looking up, saw his friend the Bumble-Bee sitting, rather uncomfortably, on a poppy which was swaying to and fro in the breeze in rather a disturbing manner.

The Frog began to discuss in a loud voice the *impossibility* of her poor Tadpoles having met the sad fate which the Sparrow had suggested, and in the confusion and excitement Roderick, having thanked the Bumble-Bee for warning him, got up and hurried away through the crowd on the beach and in the direction of some huge rocks in the distance, feeling, to his regret, that he was evidently not entirely popular with the present company.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RABBIT'S TAIL.

RODERICK gave a little sigh of relief when he had passed the rocks and got out of sight of the unfriendly creatures who seemed to think so slightly of boys. "It's a jolly good job they didn't recognise me," thought he; "I should probably have had rather a bad time with them one way and another. What nonsense it is their being so upset about a Snake having got into the place; it must have been only a tiny little one to have been able to get through that Hole in the Wall. And then to blame me for it! Why, it was nothing to do with *me*."

He was thinking thus, when he suddenly perceived, almost in front of him, the Mole and the Guinea-Pig, sitting at tea, before what looked to him at first very like a huge cavern. A moment later, however, he saw that he was mistaken, for the "cavern" began to open and shut, and he could perceive what was really the case. A Fish with a very large ugly head had crawled out of the water and, using its two fins as legs, had dragged itself up on to the sand, and what he

had mistaken for a cavern was really the creature's mouth, which happened to be wide open at the time.

"Come along!" cried the Guinea-Pig. "You're just in time for a cup of tea, and I shall be able to introduce you to my old friend the Fishing-Frog. I was telling you about him some time ago. Do you remember?"

Roderick hurried forward, and was just about to offer his hand when he realized, only just in time, that, of course, the creature had no hands, and that if he got up to offer a fin to Roderick he would lose his balance and be upset. The Fishing-Frog, however, did not seem in the least disconcerted, and just *winked* in a most amiable way, remarking that he was pleased to meet any friend of the Guinea-Pig's, and that he hoped Roderick would join them in a cup of tea.

"Milk and sugar?" asked the Mole, who was pouring out, and a minute later Roderick was sitting down, feeling quite at home, and sipping his tea with as much relish as though it was the most ordinary thing in the world for him to be taking tea with these unusual companions.

"What do you think of him?" demanded the Guinea-Pig, jerking his thumb in the direction of the Fishing-Frog, at whom Roderick happened to be looking. "He's not a beauty, is he?"

"W—why," stammered Roderick, greatly embarrassed at this blunt question, "I—I—"

"Don't mind in the least saying exactly what you think," remarked the Guinea-Pig. "*He* won't mind. Lor, bless you! he's one of the most amiable fellows in the world. Beauty's only skin deep at the best, and he's one of the best without the beauty. Ha! ha! ha!" And the Guinea-Pig, evidently rather pleased with this remark, held his sides with laughter and rolled about in great glee.

"I was thinking, sir," said Roderick, in order to get out of the difficult position in which he found himself, "that it was singular you should be called a *Fishing Frog*."

"It's because of these," explained the Fishing-Frog, nodding his head and shaking two long bony appendages which grew above it, and which he was able to move about in any direction. At the present moment they had two cards attached to them bearing the words: "Teas provided" and "Accommodation for families." "In ordinary circumstances when I am in the sea I use these for fishing purposes, and

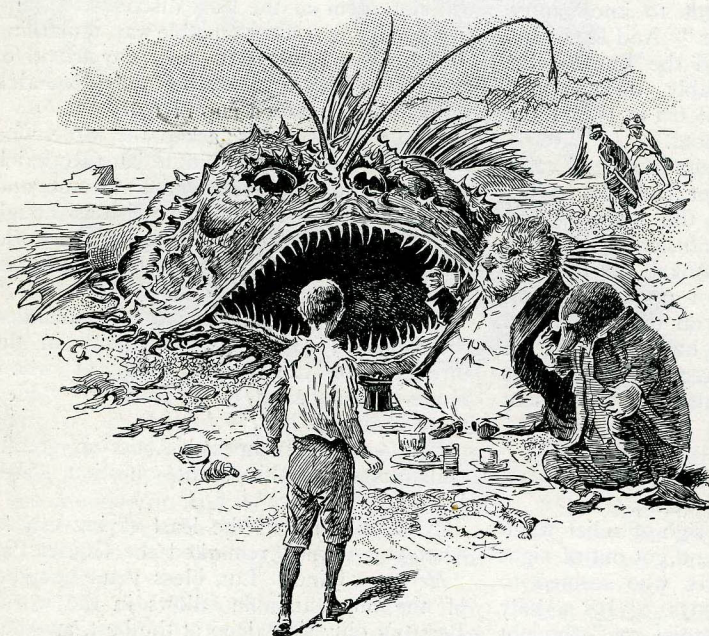
manage to pick up a very tidy living. Here, of course, it is not necessary. That's how I get my name, though."

"But why Frog?" inquired Roderick.

"Ah! I told you he wasn't much like a Frog, didn't I?" chimed in the Guinea-Pig, "any more than you're like an insect or—a—a—what did you tell me you were?"

"A—a Boy, you know," said Roderick, hesitatingly, for he scarcely knew how the others might take it.

"Ah, yes, to be sure," remarked the Guinea-Pig, "a Boy, of course, and a very pleasant thing to be, too—that is, if you're the right sort."



"COME ALONG, YOU'RE JUST IN TIME FOR A CUP OF TEA."

"He hasn't a tail," grumbled the Mole, "and I can't see——"

"No, you can't," interrupted the Guinea-Pig; "anyone knows that, so what do you want to make a fuss about it for? What I say is, boys are——"

"Boys!" exclaimed a voice, finishing the sentence, and the Jerboa, who had been absent up to now, hopped into sight. "I've heard a pretty tale about *you*," he added, nodding at Roderick. "I've been down to the seaside, and there's rare commotion going on there. Nobody seems to have a good word to say concerning you but the Bumble-Bee. The Wasp, who has just turned up, is flying about saying all sorts of things in your disfavour; and the general

impression seems to be that you ought to be caught and locked up till the rest of the animals are told about you. I thought I'd let you know at once."

"Oh dear! Oh dear!" sighed Roderick, "I'm so sorry. I can't think what I've done to get myself so disliked. I don't seem to have any friends here at all."

"Yes you have," declared the Guinea-Pig; "I'm your friend, and I'll stick to you, whatever you've done, for the sake of the boy who used to treat me so well when I belonged to him—bless his dirty little sticky fingers. I'm your friend."

"You may rely upon me, too," said the Mole, "although you haven't got a tail, and——"

"Neither have I," reminded the Guinea-Pig.

"That's just what I was going to say," continued the Mole, "and I get on with you all right, so I'm sure that I shall with him."

"I say," interrupted the Jerboa, suddenly, pointing to where, around the farther point, an excited procession, led by the Lobster, was making its way towards them, "here they come. They're after you, Boy. What's to be done?"

They could see that the matter was serious by the determined way in which the Lobster was flourishing a large coil of rope which he held in one

claw, while the Cuttlefish was dragging a huge net along in which Roderick was evidently to be imprisoned. The Starfish were running along as quickly as their flabby little legs would allow them to do, and the Crab, dragging a child by each claw, hurried along in the background. A further crowd appeared an instant later from the other side of the rocks, led by the Frog, and a number of her sympathizers, including the Chameleon, who seemed quite to have gone over to their side, by the vindictive and excited way in which he pointed Roderick out to the others, urging them on and evidently greatly enraged.

"Fly! fly!" cried the Guinea-Pig, "while there's time! Quickly!"

"Yes! yes!" urged the Mole, springing up suddenly and overturning the tea-table.

"But—where? Why?" stammered Roderick, quite bewildered by the turn events had taken. "How can I possibly get away in time?"

"If you wouldn't mind stepping inside," offered the Fishing-Frog, pointing to his enormous mouth with his tail, "I think I could accommodate you. Mind my teeth, please, in stepping over them, they're rather sharp."

There was no time to hesitate, and Roderick ran into the shelter offered. The creature immediately closed its mouth, and the boy was in complete darkness. Then he felt that the Fishing-Frog was moving, painfully and slowly, over the sand, and an instant later they were skimming through the water with a delightfully easy motion.

It never occurred to Roderick to feel alarmed till they had been floating along for some few minutes, and then he began to wonder where the Fishing-Frog was taking him to. He thought for a second of asking, but suddenly realized that, of course, the creature couldn't answer him with his mouth full, and especially as he was under the water. There was another thing troubling him, and that was, that he began to have exactly the same feeling that he had before experienced when he had suddenly grown larger, and he realized how very awkward it would be, both for the Fishing-Frog and himself, if the same thing happened now.

"And I really believe that I *am* growing," he thought, in alarm, stretching his hand up over his head to see if he could feel anything above him. "Yes, there was the roof of the creature's mouth, and presently, to his great dismay, he found that his head was touching it. The Fishing-Frog gave a start and began swimming quicker than ever, and, at last, with a bump arrived at a standstill and opened its mouth. Roderick could see at once that they were at the edge of the shore, and with very great difficulty he managed to scramble out into the shallow water, tearing his clothes a little as he did so on the Fishing-Frog's sharp-pointed teeth.

The creature gave a gasp of relief and regarded Roderick reproachfully. "That's a pretty sort of treatment to give anyone when

they've been doing you a kindness," he complained.

"What do you mean?" asked Roderick, wading ashore through the shallow water.

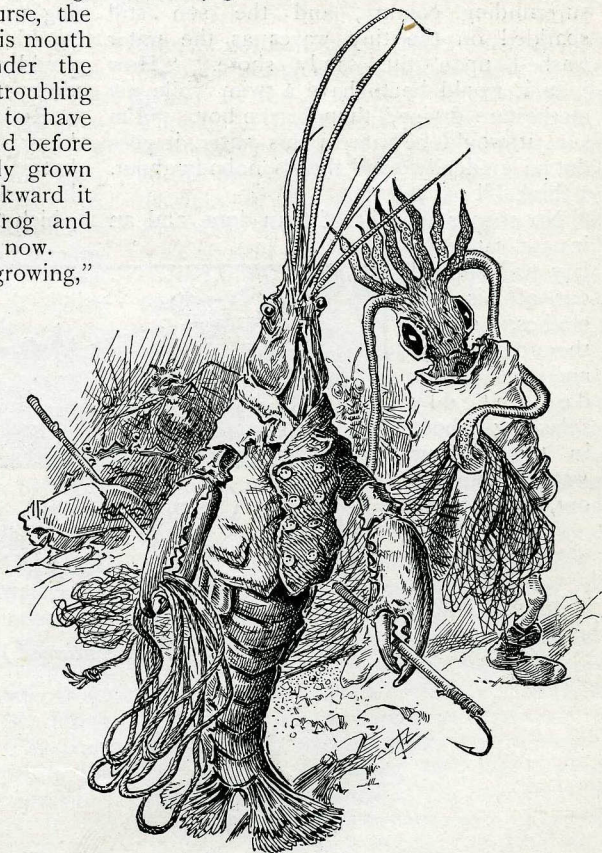
"Jumping up and tickling the top of my mouth," said the Fishing-Frog, indignantly.

"I didn't jump up, I—er—I grew up," Roderick endeavoured to explain. "Look at me, now! I'm nearly twice the size that I was, and I'm still growing, I can feel it."

"You're a most inconvenient person to carry in one's mouth," grumbled the Fishing-Frog; "and if I had known that you were going to behave like that I really don't think I should have offered to bring you here, out of danger."

"Well, I'm very sorry," said Roderick, "but I really couldn't help growing, you know."

"You might have postponed it to a more convenient season, I should have imagined," remarked the Fishing-Frog. "However, it's of no use arguing about it now. Here you are, and if I've been of any service to you, I'm very glad."



"THEY COULD SEE THAT THE MATTER WAS SERIOUS."

"You have," said Roderick, gratefully, "and I'm very, very much obliged to you."

"That's all right, then, and you can count upon me as one of your friends," promised the creature. "From what I can see of it, you will want all you can get if you are going to stay here. Now, good-bye, I must be off. Give my love to the Rabbit if you meet him, and remind the Tortoise that he has a piece of poetry of mine that I shall be glad to have back again. Good-bye!" And with a swish of his tail the creature drew himself back into deep water and disappeared from view.

"Well," thought Roderick, as he looked about him after the Fishing-Frog had gone, "that's the most curious adventure I've ever had in my life—in fact, everything is curious here. I keep growing and growing, till I suppose by and by I shall be my proper height again. I wonder how tall I am now? About eight or nine inches high, I should imagine."

There was nobody in sight, a high sand-bank stretched away at the back, hiding the surrounding country, and the sun still sparkled on the tiny waves as the water washed upon the sandy shore. "How jolly it would be to have a swim while my clothes are drying," thought the boy. "I'm sure it would be safe in this water, it goes out so gradually; and there's nobody about. I think I'll risk it."

No sooner thought of than done, and an instant later the boy had slipped out of his wet clothes, spread them out to dry, and was soon delightedly splashing about in the shallow water. He walked out, and out, and

out, till he could find water deep enough to swim in, and was so thoroughly enjoying himself that he never once thought of looking towards the shore. When he did so, quite a long while afterwards, he gave a shout of dismay, for the tide had risen till it had reached his clothes, and they were just beginning to float about.

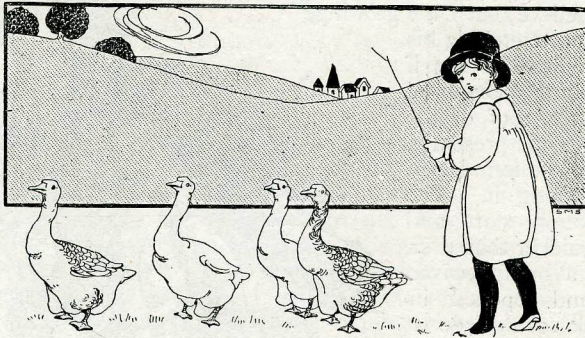
Roderick quickly swam to shallow water, and was plodding through it as fast as he could, when he saw two little furry creatures, about the same size as himself, dash out of a hole in the sandbank, and come running down to the shore carrying long sticks with which they hastily drew his clothes ashore and began doing them up in a bundle.

"Thank you!" shouted Roderick; "they're mine!"

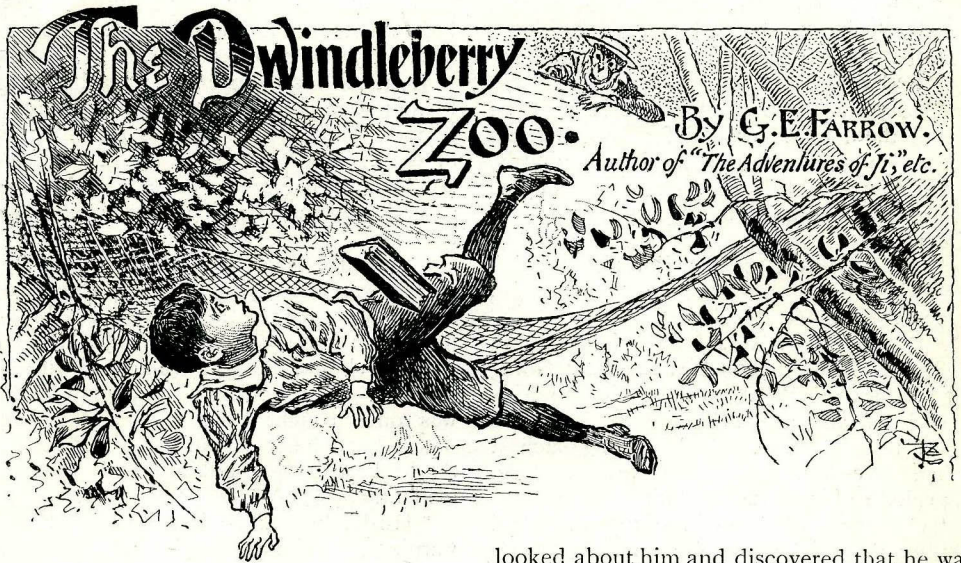
The little creatures started and, shading their eyes with their paws, looked out to sea till they caught sight of the boy wading towards them. "You're a fish!" shouted one. "And a story-teller," added the other, "because fishes don't wear clothes. They belong to us; we found them." And gathering up the bundle they ran as hard as they could up the bank, and before Roderick could reach the shore they had disappeared down the hole.

Roderick was so angry that he did not know what to do, and, hurrying across the hot sand, which quite burned his bare feet, he rushed to the mouth of the hole into which the little creatures who had stolen his

clothes had disappeared and, without waiting to consider the consequences, jumped in after them, and immediately found himself falling—falling—falling—into space.



(To be continued.)



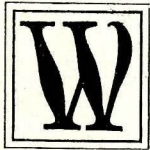
SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

COMMENCED IN THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER.

RODERICK was lying in a hammock in a garden near the Zoo, reading a book on Natural History. A Monkey looks over the wall and invites him to visit the Dwindleberry Zoo. The Monkey gives him a dwindleberry, which makes him so tiny that he can creep through a very small hole behind the ivy. A Beetle is the door-keeper, and his main task seems to be to keep out a Snake, for all the creatures in the Dwindleberry Zoo are under a vow not to harm one another, and the Snake cannot be trusted. After many adventures Roderick goes to a Butterflies' garden party. There comes a rumour that a Snake has got through the Hole in the Wall, and, moreover, Roderick suddenly begins to grow again. The party breaks up in confusion. Roderick goes on the Seaside and Switchback Railway with the Guinea-Pig and Jerboa. He is shot out violently on the soft sand of the Imitation Seaside. A rumour is abroad that a Boy brought the Snake in, and he finds the creatures very hostile. He is saved by a Fishing-Frog. He grows again, and goes for a bathe. Two Rabbits steal his clothes. He pursues them, jumps down their hole, and finds himself falling into space.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OWL'S TAIL.



WHEN Roderick felt himself falling down into unknown space he was for the moment alarmed, but soon realized that he could not possibly fall far, as it was, no doubt, a rabbit's hole, and in that case it would certainly not be very deep. He soon found that he was right in his surmises, and that nothing worse happened than that he arrived on a heap of loose sand at the bottom.

Quickly gathering himself up he

looked about him and discovered that he was at the entrance of a long tunnel, towards the end of which the two little furry figures could be seen hurrying off with his clothes tucked under their arms. Roderick shouted out to them to stop, and, somewhat to his surprise, they did so.



"DON'T BE CHEEKY," SAID THE RABBIT."

"Who is it?" they shouted, in return, peering back into the darkness.

"It's me; you've taken my clothes," declared Roderick.

The young Rabbits, for that is what he found them to be, waited for him to reach them, and then stared at him curiously. "Are you the fish that came out of the water and ran after us?" inquired one of them.

"Fish! No, of course I'm not a fish," replied Roderick, crossly; "I was bathing and left my clothes on the shore."

"Bathing!" exclaimed one of the young Rabbits. "What do you mean by that? Going into the water? What a funny thing to do—that is, if you are really not a Fish. I've never heard of anyone else doing such a thing. We don't do it, do we?" and he appealed to his brother Rabbit.

"Of course not," was the reply. "And neither would anyone else in their proper senses. We saw the clothes lying there and nobody in sight, so we took them. If they're really yours, though——"

"They are," interrupted Roderick; "and I'd advise you to give them back at once, or——"

"Don't be cheeky," said the Rabbit, "or you won't get them at all."

"We'll soon see about that," said Roderick, going up to the Rabbit and angrily endeavouring to take the clothes from him.

"Don't let him have them, Bunny," chimed in the other one, going to his brother's assistance, and the three were struggling violently for the possession of the articles, when suddenly a larger Rabbit, accompanied by two or three younger ones, made her appearance.

"Dear! dear! What's all this?" she cried, separating the quarrellers. "What *are* you doing, Bunny and Sonny?"

"We—we—found some clothes on the shore, and this Fish came out of the sea and——"

Bunny was spluttering when Roderick chimed in: "I'm not a Fish, and they're my clothes. I'm a boy, if you know what that is. You're all so stupid here that I shouldn't be surprised if you didn't."

"Tut, tut! my child," said the big Rabbit, rebukingly; "you mustn't talk like that to your elders. Put on your things—Bunny, give them to him at once—and come out into the meadow beyond the tunnel here and tell me all about yourself. If you're really a good boy I shall be glad to have a talk with you. Come, children!" And the lady

Rabbit hurried off, pushing Bunny and Sonny before her and followed by the little ones, who shyly clung to her skirts.

Roderick soon slipped into his things and, being rather ashamed for his little outburst of temper, followed curiously to the other end of the tunnel. Here he found a kind of lawn, and before a large summer-house several creatures standing about or sitting on the grass.

"I should have let them fight it out," a shrill voice was saying; "it does them good at that age—makes them able to hold their own when they grow older. And if it's *really* a boy, I should like to have a word with him myself. Boys, indeed! My grandmother was once caught by a boy, and a pretty dance he led her, I can tell you." And a Squirrel who was talking, and who was evidently greatly excited, paused for breath.

"Hush! here he comes," said the Rabbit, warningly, as she caught sight of Roderick.

The boy came forward rather sheepishly, and apologized to the Rabbit for what he had said in the tunnel.

"Oh, never mind, my dear," said the Rabbit, kindly, "we are all apt to lose our tempers sometimes, and when one loses one's clothes as well there's every excuse for them. This is my neighbour, the Squirrel. She lives in the tree at the end of the meadow."

"You're a boy, aren't you?" said the Squirrel, regarding Roderick with some disfavour.

"Yes," was the reply.

"H'm! poor thing! Well, you can't help it, I suppose. I'm sorry for you."

"It doesn't matter, thank you," said Roderick. "I'm quite content to be a boy."

The Squirrel sniffed. "Some people are easily satisfied," she said.

"You're very small indeed for a boy, are you not?" inquired the Rabbit, evidently anxious to turn the conversation.

"Well, yes, I am," admitted Roderick; "but—you see—I'm growing very rapidly, by fits and starts, and no doubt I shall soon be my proper height again."

"You're an improper height at present, then?" inquired the Squirrel. "I thought there was something about you that I didn't like. I'll be off. Good-bye, my dear." And she gathered up her skirts and, after kissing Mrs. Rabbit, rustled off fussily.

"A little irritable," explained the Rabbit, indulgently, "but an excellent neighbour. She has a prejudice against boys. Her grandmother was caught by one, I believe, and he

very foolishly put her into a cage with a revolving wheel, and the poor old lady was suffering from rheumatics at the time, too. I've heard her say she found it very trying at times. However, she fortunately escaped, and has now been living in peace and quietness here for some time."

Here an elderly Tortoise, who was evidently taking care of the young Rabbits, came up with several of her charges. "If you please, ma'am, the Owl says will you just step over and speak to him for a moment," she said.

"Yes, Tortoise, certainly," replied Mrs. Rabbit. "Have you heard the children say their lessons yet?"

"Yes, ma'am. Master Bunny has repeated 'Who Killed Cock Robin?' and Master Sonny the Multiplication Table up to 'Nine Times,' and the little ones have said their Alphabet."

"That's right," said Mrs. Rabbit, smiling. "Now they may come with us and see old Dr. Owl—he's so fond of children."

"That's my governess," explained she, as Roderick walked with her across the meadow, and the Tortoise followed behind with the little ones. "She's a dear old thing—very slow but very sure; she's been in the family for years, taught us all for generations. They live to a great age, you know. I've heard she's over a hundred, if she's a day. But here we are, and I shall be able to introduce you to my dear old friend, Dr. Owl—and the Rook, I do declare!" This as a melancholy-looking bird, wearing a muffler, flew down to the rail fence on which the Owl was perched.

"How are you, Rabbit?" inquired the Owl, rubbing his glasses carefully and peering at Roderick curiously. "Now, what is this you have with you? I've been wondering ever since I saw you talking to it over there."

"This is a boy, Dr. Owl; a—er—ahem—a very small boy, as you will see."

"Dear me, yes. Why, so it is! I haven't seen a boy for years. It's very sad for

you, my poor boy, isn't it?" he inquired, sympathetically, patting Roderick on the head with one claw.

"What do you mean, sir?" inquired he, respectfully, for the Owl seemed such a venerable-looking person in his skull cap and glasses.

"No tail, you know," said the Owl. "You're the only animal without a tail that I can think of. And then, to be descended from Monkeys—it's very hard on you."



"DEAR ME, YES. WHY, SO IT IS! I HAVEN'T SEEN A BOY FOR YEARS."

Bunny and Sonny, who had by this time arrived with their governess, looked at Roderick and tittered. "Did you hear he's descended from a Monkey?" whispered Bunny.

Sonny nodded. "Um! And he hasn't a tail. Cheek, calling himself an animal at all. I'd be one thing or another while I was about it."

Roderick wisely took no notice of their taunts, but replied to Dr. Owl. "I don't

think it's quite decided that we *did* descend from Monkeys, is it, sir?" he asked, smiling.

"Positively," remarked the Owl.

"Of course," croaked the Crow, coughing violently, and having to be patted on the back by his friend; "one of your own people has admitted it—wrote a book about it, I'm told."

"Yes, I'm afraid there's *no* doubt about the matter. It's very sad. *Descended* from Monkeys! Now, if only you had *ascended* from them it would have been quite a different matter."

"You might have had a lot of tails then," croaked the Crow; "though what you would have done with them, goodness only knows. I find one a bother sometimes. Oh! it's a sad world!" And he choked and sighed again.

"Well, I'm quite happy without one," laughed Roderick.

"Oh, if you are content to be defective, I'm sure it doesn't matter to us," said the Crow. "Nothing matters." And he sighed once more.

"Have you been here long?" inquired the Owl, after a pause, and evidently desirous of changing the subject. "I don't think I've seen you before."

Roderick explained, as well as he was able, all that had happened, and how he came to be there at all. The Rabbits and their governess and the two birds seemed greatly interested, and asked him numberless questions.

"It's very interesting," said the Rabbit, "particularly about your growing bigger every now and then."

"I think it's more interesting about the Snake," said the Owl; "in fact, that bids fair to be *very* exciting."

"Why?" inquired Roderick.

"You'll see all in good time," declared the Owl, mysteriously. "In the meantime, have you any snuff?"

"Good gracious! no," said Roderick.

"Human beings do use it sometimes," remarked the Owl, "and I merely asked, because you would find it very useful later on. I should advise you to get some."

"Some snuff?" cried Roderick. "Whatever for, and where could I get it?"

"That's your look-out," said the Owl, folding his glasses, and preparing to depart. "In the meantime, I'm going. Good evening, all." And he flew off, accompanied by the melancholy Crow.

"May I ask where you are going to stay

to-night?" inquired the Rabbit, thoughtfully, for it was by this time beginning to get quite dusk.

"I—I don't know in the least," stammered Roderick, who had never given the matter a thought till that moment.

"We've a spare room which is quite at your service, if you like," said the Rabbit.

"Oh yes, do come," chimed in Bunny and Sonny, who had become quite interested in Roderick since they had heard him relate his adventures.

The boy didn't hesitate long before gratefully accepting the Rabbit's kind invitation, and, crossing the meadow again at an angle, they soon found themselves before a neat little house with a brass plate, on which was written: "A. Rabbit, Esq."

"My husband has been away for a few days' holiday," said the Rabbit, "but he may be home at any time. He'd be very pleased to see you, I know. He belonged to a boy in his early days, and I have often heard him say how kindly he was treated. Fresh cabbages every day, and I don't know what other luxuries, and that's partly why I was so interested when I heard you say that you were a boy."

And with this the Rabbit threw open the door and bade him welcome. A hearty supper of delicious bread and milk and a romp with the young Rabbits (with whom Roderick soon became quite familiar), and he began to feel tired and sleepy. This the kind-hearted Rabbit soon discovered, and suggested that perhaps he would like to retire for the night. The young Rabbits were sent off to bed, and Roderick was shown his pretty little room. He lost no time in undressing and tumbling into bed, and, tired out with all the excitement of the day, was soon fast asleep. He must have been sleeping for some time, for when he awoke suddenly, with a most singular feeling of discomfort, the day was already beginning to dawn, and he could dimly distinguish some of the articles in the room. There was a curious feeling as though something was pressing violently against his head, and his feet were jammed tightly against the foot of the bed. Presently there was a crash, and he found himself on the floor! The bed had given way! There was a sound of rushing about and talking downstairs, the household had evidently been awakened by the noise, and the Rabbit's voice was heard anxiously inquiring what was the matter.

"I—I—hardly know," said Roderick. And at the same instant there came a sound

of falling glass, and his leg and foot shot out of the window, while his head bumped violently against the door, making it impossible for him to get up, or for the door to be opened. Then at last he realized what was happening. He was growing again!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FOX'S TAIL.

It was indeed a curious difficulty to be in, and Roderick, who even now felt himself growing, could not imagine what the end of it all would be. He could hear the Rabbit knocking loudly at the door.

"Is there anything the matter?" she asked, in an anxious voice. "What is all that noise? Have you broken anything?"

"I'm afraid I have," replied Roderick. "One of my legs has gone out of the window."

"Dear, dear! Are you hurt? Pray open the door and let me in," cried the Rabbit, in a fluster.

"I'm very sorry," said the boy, "but I can't. My head is jammed against the door. The fact is I've been growing rather suddenly, and the room is not big enough for me—and—I've broken the bed—and——"

"Fire! Thieves! Burglars!" screamed a shrill voice from the outside of the house. "Cousin Rabbit, wake up! There are burglars in the house, but I've caught one of them by the leg"; and Roderick felt a noose of rope thrown over his foot and tightened about his ankle.

"Why it's Cousin Billy, the Hare," said the Rabbit, just as Roderick felt a violent pull at the rope around his leg. "Go and ask him to come in."

"Silly Billy, you're to come inside," shouted one of the young Rabbits, going to the door. "There's something the matter."

"He, he! Yes, I know. It's a burglar, but I've got him, though," and he gave the rope another pull. "I was just going home and saw his leg sticking out of the window. Fortunately I had got my rope with me. I'd been sitting up all night trying to fish the moon out of the pond. I could see it there quite distinctly, but I couldn't catch it, though I did tie a piece of green cheese on for bait. He, he!"

"Poor Billy, he's more mad than ever," Roderick heard the Rabbit mutter. "It's not a burglar at all, Billy, dear," she explained, aloud; "it's a friend, but he's been

growing in the night and has become too big for the room."

"He, he, he!" laughed the Hare. "He must be as mad as I am. Mustn't he? Why, I wouldn't be so silly as to do that."

"Yes, yes, Billy, but what's to be done?" cried the Rabbit. "We can't get him out of the room anyhow."

The Hare didn't answer for a moment. He was evidently considering. "I know," he said, at last; "I'll go and get a saw and

things, and we'll get him out a bit at a time."

"No, no," cried the Rabbit,



"HE, HE! YES, I KNOW. IT'S A BURGLAR, BUT I'VE GOT HIM, THOUGH."

"that wouldn't do at all, Billy. Try—try and think of some other way."

"You might burn the house down," was the next brilliant suggestion.

"No! Oh, dear! I'm afraid you're no good at all, Billy. Whatever shall I do?"

Roderick was beginning to feel very cramped, but was absolutely afraid to move in either one direction or another for fear of breaking something else, and just then a



"'VERY SERIOUS,' SAID THE FOX, 'VERY SERIOUS INDEED!'"

violent "Rat-tat-a-tat-tat" sounded at the outer door.

"Run, Bunny, dear, and see who it is," cried the Rabbit, and a moment afterwards there was a cry of delight—"Why, it's father," and then the sound of heavy footsteps on the stairs.

"Halloa! halloa! what's all this?" cried a gruff voice. "My dear, what *has* happened?"

"It's only a boy, dear. I've always heard you speak so highly of boys, and this one came to visit us—unexpectedly, in fact. Bunny and Sonny——"

"A boy!" interrupted Father Rabbit. "Why, however did you get him inside the house?"

"He wasn't at all that size, dear, when he came; he grew in the night so much that——"

"Nonsense!" cried Father Rabbit, impatiently. "Boys don't go on like that. He must be an impostor. He's not a real boy at all."

"He came out of the sea first, father," chimed in Bunny's voice.

"And he's broken the spare bed," added Sonny.

"This is evidently a case for the Law," said Father Rabbit, sternly. "Billy, you can run fastest. Go and fetch Lawyer Fox, and you might ask Builder Badger to come with him. We shall have to take out some of

the windows, and perhaps a part of the wall, in order to get him out, apparently."

"It would be much cheaper to get him out a bit at a time," grumbled the Hare, as he clattered down the stairs. He had no sooner gone than Father Rabbit got a long pair of steps and placed them against the wall outside the room in which Roderick was imprisoned, and the latter could see his angry-looking little face peering in at the window.

"Tut! tut! tut!" he heard him say, as he clambered down. "The room's a perfect wreck. It will be a case for heavy damages."

There was a commotion outside, and a sound of hurrying footsteps.

Evidently the Fox and the Badger had arrived. "Dear, dear!" exclaimed a thin voice. "Burglars?"

"No, but evidently a case of trespass," said the Rabbit.

"No, dear, not that," interrupted his wife. "I invited him to stay, you know."

"But he isn't what he pretended to be; I'm certain of that," protested

the Rabbit.

"H'm! Obtaining entry by false pretences; very serious," said the Fox, "very serious indeed! What steps do you intend to take?"

"I wanted your advice on that point," said the Rabbit.

"Advice? That will be—er—six-and-eightpence," said the Fox, mechanically. "Dear, dear, I forgot, though, there's no money in this ridiculous place. Well, let's see—you can pay me in kind."

"All right, anything you like," said the Rabbit.

"That's the way I like to hear people talk," replied the Fox. "Always give your lawyer a free hand, never mind the expense. Now we'll go about this matter in a proper way. We must first serve him with a notice to quit—that will be another six-and-eightpence—er—I mean—some more kind; and then if he takes no notice of that we'll serve him with a writ of ejectment, that will be another six-and—er—some more kind, I mean; then finally we'll eject him—forcibly, if necessary. That's a *very* expensive legal process, but——"

"Dear me!" cried the poor Rabbit, "I'd no idea all this had to be done. How long will it take, pray?"

"I couldn't say within a month or two—the Law cannot be hurried, you know—but I

should say we could have him out by Christmas——”

“Christmas!” exclaimed the Rabbit. “Why, I want him out at once.”

“H’m—of course it could be managed,” said Lawyer Fox, “er—that is, if you pay me the fees exactly the same as though all these processes had been tried. The fees are the great thing in Law, you know—nothing else really matters very much.”

“Oh, well, I’ll pay you what you like—only get him out,” promised the Rabbit.

“Very well. Badger, take down the side of the wall—never mind what damage you do, the person inside will have to pay for that. Come along! Get to work at once; we’ll soon have him out of this.”

The Badger scrambled up the ladder and immediately got to work. In an incredibly short space of time he had, with some tools which he had brought with him, torn down the wall between the two windows, and Roderick was able to slide out and, since he was now so big, to drop to the ground with very little effort. The animals looked rather surprised to see him so tall, and Father Rabbit treated him with greater respect than he had evidently intended doing.

“I—I’m very sorry, indeed,” stammered Roderick, feeling very awkward. “You s—see, I didn’t know that I was going to grow so much in the night or I wouldn’t have stayed here, of course.”

“I—I’m very angry,” said the Rabbit.

“I’m sure you must be,” replied Roderick; “anyone would be, but anything I *can* do to make good the damage I’ve done I shall be most happy to do.”

“Damages! Oh yes, of course, I’ll see to that. There’ll be very heavy damages, I can promise you,” said the Fox, looking at him shrewdly. “You must come home with me and I’ll make out a bill of costs.”

“You’d better all stop and have some breakfast first,” suggested Mrs. Rabbit, kindly.

“No, thanks, this is *most* important; business must be attended to. We’ll be off at once, if you don’t mind,” said the Fox.

The Badger packed up his tools and slung the basket containing them over his shoulder, and Roderick, feeling that he was almost a prisoner, shook hands with the Rabbits and ruefully followed the Lawyer and the Builder.

The Fox did not speak till they were out of sight, and then his manner changed entirely. “The Rabbit has landed himself in a pretty hole, my dear sir,” he said. “You have a very good case for Action at Law against him. You will require a lawyer to conduct your case. Allow me to offer my card,” and he handed Roderick a card with the following words written on it:—

Mr. Fox,

Barrister-at-Law,

The Badger’s Cete, Dwindleberry Zoo, W.

“My friend Mr. Badger—with whom you may be surprised to see me so familiar—belongs to one of the oldest families in the Zoo, and his country cete is one of the most famous in the neighbourhood.”

“Isn’t that a curious way to spell it?” said Roderick, looking at the card. “I thought it was s-e-a-t.”

“No, no: a family peculiarity. All the Badgers spell it c-e-t-e,” explained the Fox.



““HAVE YOU GOT ANY HEAVY ONES, MOTHER GOOSE, AMONGST THEM?
ASKED THE LAWYER, ANXIOUSLY.”

"But about this action against the Rabbit. Do you intend to proceed? You have a case for false imprisonment and another for improper ejectment, and another——"

"But I thought you were acting for him against me," said Roderick, in bewilderment.

"Bless me! *That* doesn't matter in the least," answered the Fox, "so long as you pay the fees. I'll act for you with pleasure."

"Well—I certainly shall *not* go to law against the Rabbit, whatever I have to pay," declared Roderick; "besides, I haven't any money, so——"

The Fox clutched his arm at this moment and stared down the road.

A big Goose, dressed in a bonnet and shawl and carrying a market basket on each arm, was waddling down the road. "Mornin', gentlemen," said she, curtsying as she passed. "It be a rare fine morning for the fair. I be a-goin' early with my eggs. There'll be a quantity of fine folks there and I should be like to sell 'em all, if I be lucky."

"Have you got any heavy ones, Mother Goose, amongst them?" asked the Lawyer, anxiously.

"One or two, Master Fox," answered the Goose, looking very keenly at him; "maybe three. You be very sly, sir, but I bee'nt so silly as I look neither, and they're not for you. Good mornin', gentlefolk," and the Goose waddled on, mumbling and muttering to herself.

"Now," whispered the Fox, hastily, while she was still in sight, "your costs and damages in the case brought against you by the Rabbit will be *very* heavy. I'll see to that. You say you have no money. You *must*, then, follow that old Goose, and somehow get those three heavy eggs she said she had amongst the others, and bring them to me. If you do this I will accept them in full discharge of all the costs and damages in the matter. Hurry up, or you'll lose sight of her! Follow her to the fair. You'll have

a chance of talking to her there, and of getting the eggs if you're clever. Now go! Remember, I *expect* the eggs. If not——"

Roderick didn't wait to hear what would be the penalty, but hurried after the Goose, while the Fox and the Badger turned into a very handsome old mansion standing by the roadside, with these words carved on the gateway:—

A Badger, Esq.,
Builder and Decorator.
His Cete.

"I wonder at him living in such a fine place," thought Roderick, as he hurried on. "He seems just an ordinary workman." He hadn't time, however, to pursue this line of thought very far, for the Goose just then turned the corner and entered the gates of a big field from which a babel of sound was proceeding. All kinds of booths and stalls were there, each surrounded by a crowd of miscellaneous animals. Bands were playing, flags and banners flying, and all was excitement and bustle.

Roderick hurried, unchallenged, through the gates and looked about, but the Goose was nowhere to be seen. Right in front of him, however, was a small tent, on which was a printed notice:—

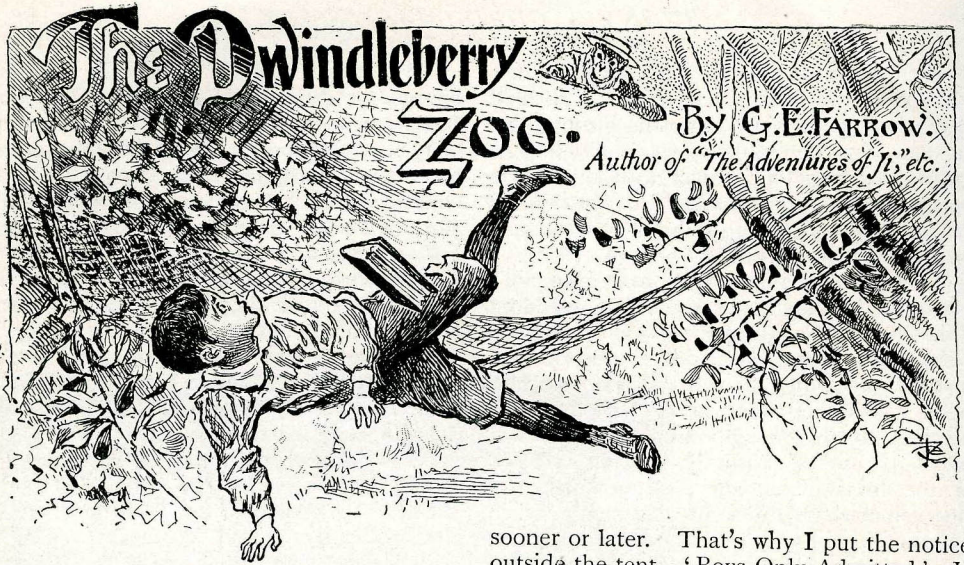
THE MOST MARVELLOUS THING IN THE FAIR.

Boys Admitted Free.

This was most extraordinary, and Roderick naturally felt that it was too good an opportunity to be wasted, so he pushed aside the curtain at the door and entered, looking about him curiously.

The place was half in darkness, but presently, when his eyes became somewhat accustomed to the subdued light, he saw a kind of divan on which, amongst a heap of Oriental cushions, he observed something waving to and fro. He went closer, and found to his surprise and dismay that it was—the Snake!

(*To be continued.*)



SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

COMMENCED IN THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER.

RODERICK was lying in a hammock in a garden near the Zoo, reading a book on Natural History. A Monkey looks over the wall and invites him to visit the Dwindleberry Zoo. The Monkey gives him a dwindleberry, which makes him so tiny that he can creep through a very small hole behind the ivy. A Beetle is the door-keeper, and his main task seems to be to keep out a Snake, for all the creatures in the Dwindleberry Zoo are under a vow not to harm one another, and the Snake cannot be trusted. After many adventures Roderick goes to a Butterflies' garden party. There comes a rumour that a Snake has got through the Hole in the Wall, and, moreover, Roderick suddenly begins to grow again. The party breaks up in confusion. Roderick goes on the Seaside and Switchback Railway with the Guinea-Pig and Jerboa. He is shot out violently on the soft sand of the Imitation Seaside. A rumour is abroad that a Boy brought the Snake in, and he finds the creatures very hostile. He is saved by a Fishing-Frog. He grows again, and goes for a bathe. Two Rabbits steal his clothes. He pursues them, jumps down their hole, and finds himself falling into space. He eventually obtains his clothes, and finds the Rabbit family very friendly. He is introduced to the Squirrel and Dr. Owl. He stays the night with the Rabbits, and at dawn finds that he has grown too big for the room. His leg and foot shoot out of the window, and the whole affair creates great commotion. The Hare suggests to the family many futile expedients for getting Roderick out, but Father Rabbit sends for Lawyer Fox and Builder Badger. The latter extricates Roderick and the former makes out a long bill of costs. Roderick has no money, and is forced to accompany the Fox, and they meet a Goose going to the fair to sell her eggs. The Fox asks her if she has any heavy ones, but she will not tell him. The Fox gives Roderick the task, in order to pay his debts, of following her to the fair and procuring three heavy eggs from her. Roderick hurries away and enters the fair, but the Goose is nowhere to be seen. He goes into one of the booths, and there, amongst a heap of Oriental cushions, he finds—the Snake!

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAPYBARA'S TAIL.

RODERICK gazed, fascinated by the Snake as it lay coiled up with its head only raised. On a low table beside it some Oriental coffee-cups were arranged on a metal tray, a steaming brass ewer beside them.

"Ah," said the Snake, closing first one eye and then the other, and speaking in a soft, even voice, "I thought you'd come

sooner or later. That's why I put the notice outside the tent—'Boys Only Admitted.' It will keep the other creatures out, too, and I want to have a little chat with you all to myself. Take a seat, won't you?"

"N—no—thank you," stammered Roderick, who had an unaccountable fear of the Snake; "I—I'm afraid I can't stop, I—I must g—go at once."

"Sit down," commanded the Snake, in its quiet voice, staring at Roderick all the while in a way which somehow made him feel that it was impossible for him to disobey.

He very meekly, therefore, sat down on one of the divans and prepared to listen to what the Snake had to say.

"You know, of course," began the Snake, "that I am somewhat unpopular here."

Roderick murmured something to the effect that he had heard so.

"Yes," continued the Reptile, "they don't like me; why I can't imagine, particularly as I only came here to do good and to make them all happy. It's a terrible thing to be misunderstood," and the Snake took a handkerchief from its pocket and dabbed at its eyes pathetically; though Roderick could see quite well that there were no tears in them.

"My sole object is to make them all rich and happy, for—would you believe it?—they are one and all absolutely penniless. There isn't a sixpence in the whole place. Now what I wanted to see you about is this. There is a poor foolish creature here, who, although she doesn't know that she possesses the power of doing so, is quite able to make the fortune of every person in the place. Now I want you to make her acquaintance and do exactly as I tell you, in which case we shall be able to gain entire control of the vast wealth which she possesses."

"I don't know in the least what you are talking about," said Roderick, "but I'm certainly not going to make any acquaintances for the sake of getting their money away from them."

"Silly boy! You misunderstand me. I only want you to help me to gain control of the money in order to give it to others. See what a lot of good we could do with it. Why, I should give everybody here—every single animal, bird, or insect—a hundred pounds to commence with. They'd like me then, wouldn't they? All of them, eh? Think of that, and then——"

"Why don't you ask the person who has all this money for some of it to give away yourself, then?" interrupted Roderick.

"It wouldn't do," said the Snake, shaking its head. "She wouldn't give it to me; she's prejudiced against me by the other animals. They don't like me yet, and they've been telling her all sorts of tales about me. It's very hard!" and the hypocritical creature began to snivel again.

"Well, I can't help it. I'm not going to do what you want, anyhow," said Roderick; "and I'm going now—good-bye!"

"What!" exclaimed the Snake, raising itself up and hissing venomously. "You refuse? You dare to refuse me? Think twice, my boy, or it will be bad for you—very bad."

"I don't care, I'm not afraid! and I won't have anything to do with you or your plans," bravely replied Roderick, hurrying out of the tent at once.

He was delighted to be in the fresh air again, for the atmosphere of the place stifled him, and the hateful old Snake seemed to fascinate him with its glance.

"I won't, I won't have anything to do with it," he determined. "I'm sure no good would come of it," and he tried to drive the matter from his mind.

There was much to take up his attention in the scene around him. A

kind of fair was being held by the animals, and there were booths and tents on every side, where performances were being given, and outside which various creatures were beating drums or gongs to attract the attention of passers-by.

"It's a great success, isn't it?" said a voice beside him, and Roderick could see that he was being addressed by an Armadillo who had hurried up to him.

"I beg your pardon," said Roderick, who had not heard what he said.

"The fair, you know," replied the Armadillo. "I say it's a great success."

"Well, I've only just come," declared Roderick; "and I haven't been to any of the tents yet—except one," he added.

"Which one?" inquired the Armadillo.

"The one with the——" began Roderick, when he was interrupted by a very singular and ugly-looking animal somewhat like a small pig, only that its skin was covered with small hair and its feet were entirely different from those of a pig.

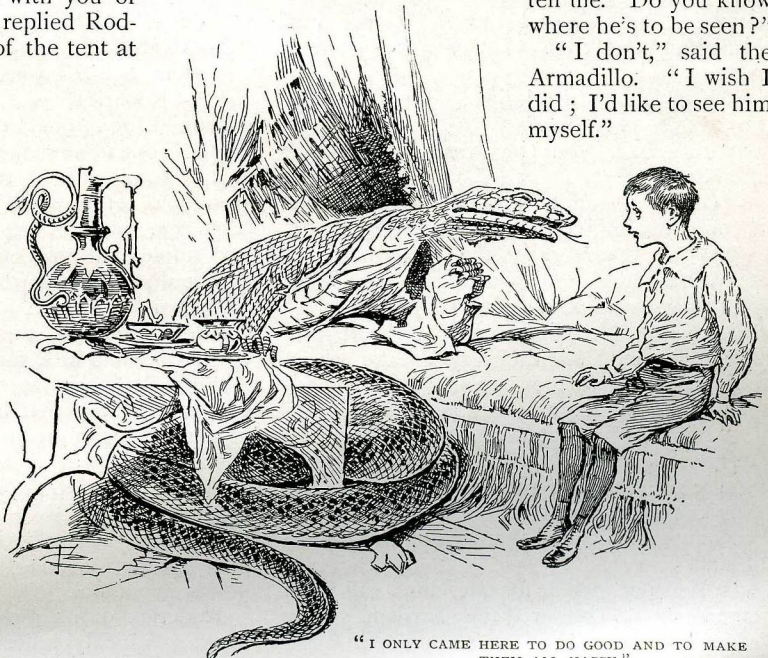
"Can you tell me," he asked, "where the tent is in which the Human Boy is to be exhibited?"

"What!" exclaimed Roderick.

"The Human Boy," repeated the creature. "I want to see him. I hear he's very ugly, and something like a monkey without a tail. He's going to be exhibited chained up in a cage, because he's dangerous at times, they

tell me. Do you know where he's to be seen?"

"I don't," said the Armadillo. "I wish I did; I'd like to see him myself."



"I ONLY CAME HERE TO DO GOOD, AND TO MAKE THEM ALL HAPPY."

Roderick thought his best plan was to keep silence, for there was no telling what might happen if they knew that *he* was a boy.

"By the way," said the Armadillo to the other, "what is your name? I quite forgot, and I should like to introduce you to our young friend here—he was just going to tell me about one of the shows he's been in to see."

"Dear me! fancy not remembering me," said the creature. "I'm the Capybara—the water-pig, you know. I'm going to give a performance myself in the tank this afternoon. We're all supposed to do something, I believe. What's your performance to be?"

"Oh, I'm going to curl up into a ball and roll down the spiral board, and afterwards burrow a hole twice my length in two minutes."

"Ah, an acrobat," said the Capybara. "And your friend—er—the—er—what did you say?"

"What's your name?" whispered the Armadillo.

"Roderick," said the boy.

"The Roderick," announced the Armadillo.

"Roderick? Roderick? Never heard of such an animal before," declared the Capybara. "And what are you going to do?" he asked.

"Er—sing something or other, if I'm asked," said Roderick, desperately.

"Oh," remarked the Capybara, looking at him somewhat suspiciously, "I didn't know animals could sing; I thought it was only birds that did that. You're not a bird, I suppose?"

"No," laughed Roderick; "I wonder what next I'll be taken for."

"Let's hear you sing then," demanded the Capybara.

"Oh, I couldn't, possibly, without an accompaniment," protested Roderick.

"What's that?" asked the Armadillo.

"Why, some kind of music to sing it to, you know," said Roderick.

"Absurd!" cried a voice overhead, and Roderick could see the very Toucan whom he had seen at the beginning of his adventures sitting on a branch above him.

"Absurd!" repeated the bird, putting on its glasses and peering down at him. "If you're going to sing—sing—and don't have any nonsense about it. I don't want any accompaniments and that sort of thing when I sing."

"Yes, but then I, for one, don't call yours singing at all," declared the Capybara; "you squeak."

"And you—you grunt," retorted the Toucan, angrily.

"Perhaps, but I don't call it singing," said the Capybara.

"Oh, pray don't argue," interrupted the Armadillo, "we want to hear the Roderick sing."

The other creatures left off wrangling and looked at him expectantly. "I'm afraid I don't remember any words," Roderick said, hesitatingly.

"Words," laughed the Toucan. "What on earth do you want with words? I don't use any words with my songs."

"Oh, very well then," said Roderick; and he began to hum the tune of a school song that came into his head just at the moment.

The creatures looked at him in a puzzled way for a moment, and then the Capybara put his fingers to his ears.

"Stop! stop!" he cried; "it's horrible!"

"I've never heard such an objectionable noise in my life," declared the Toucan.

"Why it's worse than the row *you* kick up," said the Armadillo.

Roderick turned very red, for he rather fancied that he sang well, and he was head boy in the school choir. "You asked me to sing," he protested.

"Yes, but we didn't expect you to make that extraordinary noise," said the Toucan; "that isn't singing, it's more like the mewling of a cat."

"Or a cartwheel," added the Capybara. "Do all Rodericks sing like that?"

"What is he?" asked the Toucan.

"A Roderick, whatever that may be," explained the Armadillo.

The Toucan flew down from the tree and had a good look at the boy. "H'm! I've seen you before somewhere," he said. "I can't remember where exactly, but I have a very unpleasant recollection of you somehow. Where do you come from?"

Roderick hesitated, for he had no particular desire to remind the Toucan when and where they had met, for he remembered that the bird had said at the time, "I object to you," and he felt that he was hardly likely to be regarded with greater favour now.

"I'm sorry," he said at last, evading the question, "that you don't care for my singing, and I think I'll be moving on."

"Just as you like," said the Toucan; "but pray give up making those noises, they're positively painful."

Roderick didn't reply, but walked quickly away, so quickly, indeed, that he nearly ran

into a little figure that was hurrying around the corner in his direction. It was someone in a sailor suit, and Roderick immediately recognised him as the Monkey who had helped him to get inside the Dwindleberry Zoo.

"Bless me!" cried the Monkey, staring at him in surprise, as Roderick stooped to pick up some papers which he had knocked out of the creature's hands. "Here you are at last then. I've been looking for you everywhere. Where have you been all this long while?"

"Oh, I scarcely know," said Roderick; "I've been through so many changes and met such a lot of strange creatures since I came here—and—they none of them seem to like me somehow; I don't know how it is."

"They say," said the Monkey, regarding him severely, "that you brought a Snake in with you."

"I didn't," protested Roderick.

"No," said the Monkey, "I don't believe you did, but I can guess what has happened. The Snake was in the grass outside and heard me tell you how to get into here when I threw you down the branch with the dwindleberries on it. By the way, how many of them did you eat?"

"One," said Roderick.

"That accounts for it then," said the Monkey, with conviction. "There were two on the branch. The Snake must have swallowed the other and so got through the Hole in the Wall while that foolish Beetle was away. Now we must be very careful. The Snake is very clever and will try and do a lot of mischief here, and set all the animals and birds against one another if he gets the chance. The great thing, however, is that we are all warned against him; everyone knows that he's here and is prepared, though no one has really seen him that I can gather."

"I have," declared Roderick.

"You have?" exclaimed the Monkey. "Where?" And Roderick proceeded to tell him of his adventure in the tent.



"'H'M! I'VE SEEN YOU BEFORE SOMEWHERE,"
SAID THE TOUCAN."

"Oh, that's his little game, is it?" said the Monkey. "He's going to keep out of the way himself and use someone else to do his work for him. It's very artful, but I think we'll be able to go one better and get him out of this again somehow, only we shall have to be very careful indeed. Now let me think," and the Monkey sat down and laid his finger on his forehead in a very comical way.

"I have it!" he exclaimed at length. "Take this," and he fished out from his pocket a little red berry just like that which Roderick had swallowed before. "You are evidently the only one he will trust to do his work, whatever it is. Now listen carefully. You must go back to the tent, and learn exactly what he wishes you to do, and then come and tell me. Here's a whistle," and he took a long cord with a whistle attached to it from around his neck and handed it to Roderick. "Blow this whenever you want me and I'll come to you. The berry keep by you, and, if you ever have a chance, get the Snake to swallow it. It's our great opportunity. You say he is already a great length; if he grows much bigger he will be a great danger

to us all, but if we can only get him to swallow another dwindleberry and then keep sight of him till he is small again we'll get one of the birds to pick him up and drop him over the wall once more. Now be careful. Everybody will expect you to do your best, as it is, in a way, through you that the Snake got in here, and we shall all look to you to get rid of him again. Do exactly as I tell you and all may yet be well. Now be off and see the Snake again, hear exactly what he wants, and I'll wait here till you come back."

Roderick put the cord with the whistle attached round his neck and the dwindleberry into his pocket, and set off to the tent with rather an anxious face. He hated the idea of seeing the Snake again, but he felt, as the Monkey had said, that it was clearly his duty to do so, especially if it would be the means of getting rid of the objectionable creature, which, from all that was said, was capable of causing so much trouble amongst the inhabitants of the Dwindleberry Zoo.

He soon had the tent in sight, but he had to pass the Armadillo, the Capybara, and the Toucan in order to reach it.

"Where are you going to?" shouted the Toucan, in a rough voice.

"To that tent over there," said Roderick, stopping and pointing to the one in which he had seen the Snake.

"That settles it," said the Capybara. "You were right after all, it appears, Toucan."

"Of course I was. I always am," was the reply.

"We've found out something," said the Armadillo to Roderick. "You're not a Roderick at all, you're a boy. *The* boy, in fact. It's no use denying it. I've seen what is written on that tent, 'Boys Only Admitted,' and if you're going there you must be a boy."

"Well," said Roderick, hurrying on impatiently, "what if I am. It's nothing to do with you."

"Oh, isn't it, indeed," said the Capybara; "pretending to be a Roderick, and *singing* to us — good gracious! We're going with you to see what is in that tent."

"You won't be admitted, that's one thing," said Roderick, hurrying on, the others coming after him full pelt.

When he reached the tent he saw to his great surprise that the card outside had been altered and now bore these words, "No Boys Admitted." He was far too anxious, however, to do everything which the Monkey had suggested to take any notice, and pushing aside the canvas he entered the tent. He

could hear the creatures outside reading the notice and the Toucan saying, "Perhaps I was mistaken after all, as, if he was a boy, he wouldn't have been admitted," while he was looking about the tent. The coffee was cold, there was a card on the tray, "A. Fox, Esq., Barrister-at-Law," and the cushions were all disarranged, but the Snake—the Snake was *gone*.

CHAPTER X.

THE GOOSE'S TAIL.

RODERICK hunted high and low for the Snake, his sole object now being to do as his friend the Monkey had suggested, for he felt that it was very good advice indeed. He soon convinced himself, however, that the Snake was not in the tent, and was just hurrying out when he encountered the Armadillo, the Capybara, and the Toucan, the latter having thrust his great head and bill into the tent inquisitively.

"What's in there?" he inquired.

"You had better go in and see for yourself," said Roderick, rather crossly; for he was anxious to get back as quickly as possible to the Monkey to tell him what had happened, and to ask what he had better do in the circumstances. He did not waste any further words with the Toucan or the others, therefore, but made the best of his way back to the spot where he had left his friend. To his dismay the Monkey had disappeared, and nobody was in sight but the old Goose with the basket whom he had followed into the fair.

She was sitting by the wayside fanning herself vigorously with her pocket-handkerchief. She got up when she saw Roderick though, and dropped a curtsy. "I'm very glad to meet you, sir," said she, "for perhaps you can direct me to Dr. Owl's, because I hear he's very clever, and I am in great difficulty and should like his advice. I came to the fair thinking that I might perhaps meet him here, but I've hunted everywhere without success."

"I have met Dr. Owl," said Roderick, "but that was some time ago, and he lives some little distance away. I'll try and take you there if you like, however."

"Thank you, sir," said the Goose, looking at him curiously as though she was anxious to discover if he was a person to be trusted. "I'll tell you first what it is that I want to see him about. Do you mind taking one of the eggs out of my basket — a heavy one, you'll find some are much heavier than others — and breaking it?"

and I thought I'd better see a doctor about it."

Roderick gathered up the sovereigns which had fallen to the ground and offered them to the Goose, but she insisted upon his keeping them for himself.

"I can have as many as I want at any time," said she, "and if they're of any use to you I'm sure you're very welcome, especially as you are kind enough to say that you will try and find Dr. Owl for me."

Roderick thanked her gratefully, and with his pocket full of sovereigns gaily led the way out of the fair, and, as well as he could remember it, towards the direction of the Rabbits' house. "For," he thought, "the lady Rabbit seemed to be on very good terms with Dr. Owl, and she would almost be sure to know where he is to be found."

They were walking along very comfortably, and Roderick was feeling almost sure that they were going in the right direction, when they heard a noise of someone scurrying

along at the back of them. They turned around and saw a Porcupine running as hard as he could in the same direction as themselves.

He seemed bursting with news. "I've seen the Snake," he said, as soon as he reached them; "he's such a monster. I was quite alarmed for the moment, till I remembered that no Snake could tackle *me*," and he swelled his bristles out with great conceit, till there was suddenly a sound as of tearing cloth.

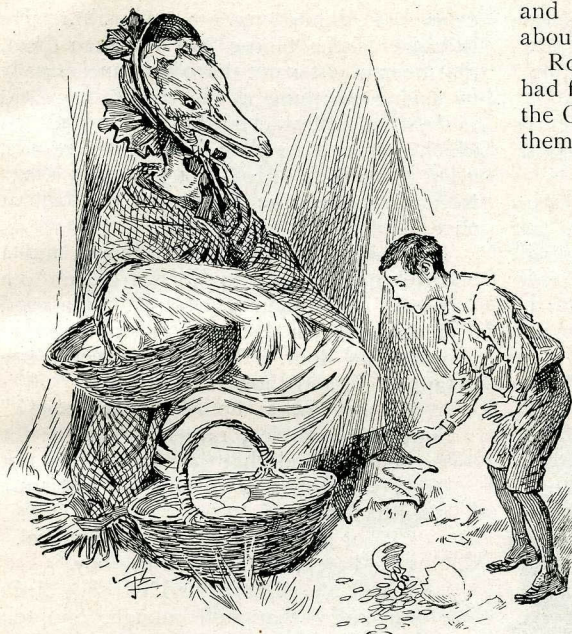
"There!" he exclaimed. "Bother it! I've torn my coat again—I'm always doing that."

"Serves you right," said the Goose; "you shouldn't give yourself such airs. One would think you were the bravest animal in the place to hear you talk. I'm sure I shouldn't like to meet the Snake, nasty creature; I can't think what he wanted to come into the place at all for."

"Well, if you don't want to see him, you'd better hurry off," said the Porcupine; "he was coming in this direction when I saw him, arm-in-arm with somebody in a red coat. I couldn't quite see who it was."

"Oh, let's hurry then," cried the Goose, catching Roderick by the arm; "come along quickly."

"I—I—rather want to see the Snake," said Roderick.



"GOOD GRACIOUS!" HE CRIED, "HOWEVER DID THEY GET THERE?"

"And what?" exclaimed Roderick, in surprise.

"Breaking it," was the reply. "You'll be greatly surprised at the result, no doubt, but just break it and see." Roderick could scarcely believe that the Goose meant what she said, but he felt one or two of the eggs and found that, as she had told him, some of the eggs were much heavier than others, and so he selected one of the heaviest and cracked it on a stone. He gave an exclamation of surprise, for to his great astonishment he found that it was full of golden sovereigns, which rolled out of the egg-shell into the pathway. "Good gracious!" he cried, "however did they get there?"

"That's just what I want to know," said the Goose, looking very foolish and silly. "I can't think *how* they got there. All I know is that every now and then I lay an egg like that, and it worries me. What are they? Do you know?" and she pointed to the sovereigns lying at his feet.

"Why, they're sovereigns—money, you know," replied Roderick. "They're ever so valuable; and each egg you lay like that must be worth seventy or eighty pounds—perhaps more."

The Goose shook her head. "I don't know anything about that," said she. "I only know that it worries me to see that my eggs are different from other people's,

"You do? What for?" inquired the Porcupine, inquisitively.

"I have some business to do with him," replied Roderick, evasively.

"Oh, please—*please* take me to Dr. Owl's first," pleaded the Goose. "I shall be so alarmed if I am left alone here."

"You've passed Dr. Owl's," said the Porcupine. "You should have taken the last turning to the left. It's not far, and you will see his name on the trunk of the Hollow

Lawyer Fox hurrying out of sight. He thought, as the Goose had not seen them, that he had better not alarm her unnecessarily by saying anything about the matter, and as they had just reached the Hollow Oak, on which was a brass-plate bearing the words, "Dr. Owl, Y.Z. Hours 11 p.m. to 4 a.m.," Roderick pulled the handle of the bell at once.

There was a clanging sound inside, and a Squirrel in a cap and apron ran out on to a bough above their heads and took a good look at them before coming down to open the door. Presently, however, she appeared, and showed them in.

"Is Dr. Owl at home, if you please?" inquired Roderick, rather nervously; for he remembered that the Doctor had not been very gracious to him the last time they had met.

"What name?" inquired the Squirrel.

"Roderick," stammered the boy.

"And the Goose," added the bird; "you know that well enough, and tell your master we won't detain him long."

"I've no patience with these hussies giving themselves such airs," said she, as the Squirrel ran upstairs to deliver the message. "They want taking down a peg or two, I can tell you."

"The Doctor says he will see you—though you have not called within the proper hours," said the Squirrel, coming down to them again. "This way, please," and she led them to the end of a long flight of stairs, and threw open a door at the top.

Dr. Owl was seated at a table on which were some books and medical instruments of various kinds. Bowing gravely, he motioned them to chairs, and, adjusting his glasses, proceeded to listen to what they had to say.

The Goose started at once, rattling on about the eggs with the golden lining till she had exhausted the story. Roderick repeated what he knew, and drew some of the sovereigns from his pocket for the Doctor to examine.

"Do you think I can be cured?" cried the Goose, anxiously.

Dr. Owl smiled grimly. "It's not a disease, madam, which many people would *wish* to be cured of. You are a most fortunate person, or at least would be considered so by most. However, there is an element of danger in the matter. There is only one other case known in medical science of a Goose which laid golden eggs, and I



"IS DR. OWL AT HOME, IF YOU PLEASE?"

Oak. Good bye!—I'm off," and he scuttled away, making a great noise with his quills, which scratched on the ground as he walked.

Roderick felt that it would be unkind to leave the Goose by herself as she was so nervous, so he took up her basket for her, and they turned about and retraced their steps for a considerable distance. They had no difficulty, however, in at last finding the turning of which the Porcupine had told them, and just as they turned the corner Roderick caught sight of the Snake and

regret to inform you that *she* was killed. But I believe there is no immediate cause for alarm. In case, however, of accidents I should advise you to make your will at once. You see, with such a vast amount of wealth as you possess, *should* anything unforeseen happen to you, great confusion would be occasioned as to its disposal. Therefore, I say, madam, make your will—make your will at once.”

“Oh, dear! Oh, dear!” sighed the poor Goose. “It makes me feel exactly as though I was going to die immediately. I never thought I should have to make a will for years to come. And besides,” she added, brightening up, “I can’t make a will yet; I haven’t anybody to leave my wealth to.”

Dr. Owl got down from the chair on which he was perched. “My dear madam, I shall be most happy to oblige. I will be your heir—with pleasure.”

The Goose looked rather confused. “It’s very good of you, I’m sure,” she began.

“Not at all! Not at all! Don’t mention it,” said the Doctor. “Now run along at once to Lawyer Fox—he’ll make out a will for you in a jiffy, and then, when he has done so—all made out in favour of Dr. Owl, Y.Z., you will remember?—*when* he has done this, come back to me, and I’ll see what I can do for you. Good day, good day,” and he bowed them to the door.

“It strikes me,” said the Goose, when they were outside, “that he didn’t get his degree for nothing.”

“What degree? What do you mean?” asked Roderick.

“Y.Z.,” replied the Goose; “you noticed those letters after his name, didn’t you?”

“Yes,” answered Roderick; “what do they mean?”

“Wise head,” said the Goose, “and I fancy he’s got his screwed on the right way. However, I suppose I’d better go to this Lawyer Fox, as he suggests, though I hate the fellow, with his nasty sneering ways. I sha’n’t leave all my wealth to Dr. Owl, though. I shall leave some to you.”

“Oh, don’t bother about that, please,” said Roderick. “I’ve got plenty with what you’ve already given me, and it might make Dr. Owl angry.”

“Well, we shall see,” said the Goose. “And now how to get to Lawyer Fox’s.”

“I think I can direct you there,” said Roderick, looking about. “I’ve been past the house once; it’s this way, I think.” And he led the way as well as he could remember.

Presently, to his great delight, he saw the

road leading to the fair, and he knew that they could not be far off the Fox’s house. He was right, and in a very few moments he could see it quite distinctly.

“Dear me!” said the Goose, stopping and looking in great distress at Roderick, “I don’t like going at all, somehow. I can’t bear that sly old Fox. What shall I do?”

“Well,” said Roderick, “I hardly like to advise you; you must really do as you think best. I am going to the Fox’s, though, for I think there is someone there whom I wish to see.”

“Oh! In that case perhaps I’d better come, too,” said the Goose, sighing doubtfully, and taking up her basket again.

They soon found themselves outside the lawyer’s door, and Roderick gave a loud rattat tat with the knocker. The door was quickly opened by the Fox himself. He gave a start of surprise when he saw them, and a delighted smile immediately spread itself over his face. “My dear—my *very* dear friends,” he cried, holding out both paws in welcome, “I am de—lighted to see you both. I can scarcely believe my eyes. Why, an acquaintance whom I have inside and I, have just been speaking about you both. Come in! pray, come in!” and he hastily drew them both in, closing the door carefully behind them, and, as Roderick noticed, locking it quickly, afterwards popping the key in his pocket. “Step into the sitting-room,” he cried, effusively; “you’ll find my friend there, but he’ll be equally pleased to see you. Step in! step in!” He waved Roderick in first, but the boy stood aside to let the Goose pass in before him. Immediately the bird had entered the room, however, she gave a startled cry and dropped her basket from her arm on to the floor, where several of the eggs burst and the gold inside them was scattered in the basket and over the floor.

“Dear, dear! how unfortunate,” cried the Fox, his eyes glittering greedily as he hastened to gather up the scattered coins, while Roderick hurried to the Goose’s assistance. He found her trembling violently and gazing in an alarmed way at an object seated in a rocking-chair at the further corner of the room. It was the Snake, who regarded them both with a cynical smile.

“Oh, allow me,” said the Fox, fussily, “to present my friend, the Snake. Er—Mr. Snake—er—Mrs. Goose. Er—Mr. Snake—er—Mr.—er—I forget your name?” This to Roderick.

“It doesn’t matter,” said the Snake, fixing Roderick with his eye, “*we* have met before.

But," he added, with a fascinating smile, which he suddenly affected, "I am charmed to make this lady's acquaintance," and his brilliant eyes glittered as he swayed to and fro in the chair.

There was an awkward pause, and then Roderick said, in rather a humble voice, addressing the Snake, "I—I—am prepared to do what you suggested to me in the tent, if you like."

"Thank you," said the Snake, coldly, "it is quite unnecessary *now*."



"THE GOOSE GAVE A STARTLED CRY AND DROPPED HER BASKET."

"Yes, quite—*quite* unnecessary *now*," laughed the Fox, after giving a meaning glance at the Goose. "In fact, I don't think we need detain you at all any longer."

"Certainly not," agreed the Snake; "he's not required here at all. His room, in fact, is more desired than his company. You can go," he said, staring at Roderick, severely.

"Oh, don't—don't go and leave me alone,"

pleaded the Goose, clinging to Roderick; "let me come too. I sha'n't make my will, whatever old Dr. Owl said. Come! Let's be off together at once."

"What's this I hear, madam? You've come to make your will? Quite right—quite right," said the Fox, smoothly, catching hold of the Goose's arm and forcing her away from Roderick. "Take a seat, take a seat; we'll soon be ready for you."

"Yes," hissed the Snake, fixing the Goose with his eyes. "Take a seat—pray take a seat," and the poor Goose, trembling and fascinated, sank panting and speechless into a chair.

"And now for you," said the Fox, catching Roderick by the arm. "You're not wanted, so out you go," and, despite his struggles to go to the poor Goose's assistance, he forced him out of the room and into the hall.

Hastily unlocking the door again he thrust Roderick outside, locking himself in with the Snake and the Goose.

Roderick looked about him in dismay when he found himself outside. What should he do? There was no one about from whom he could beg assistance, and from inside the Fox's there came the sound of stifled cries, mingled with the horrible hiss of the Snake

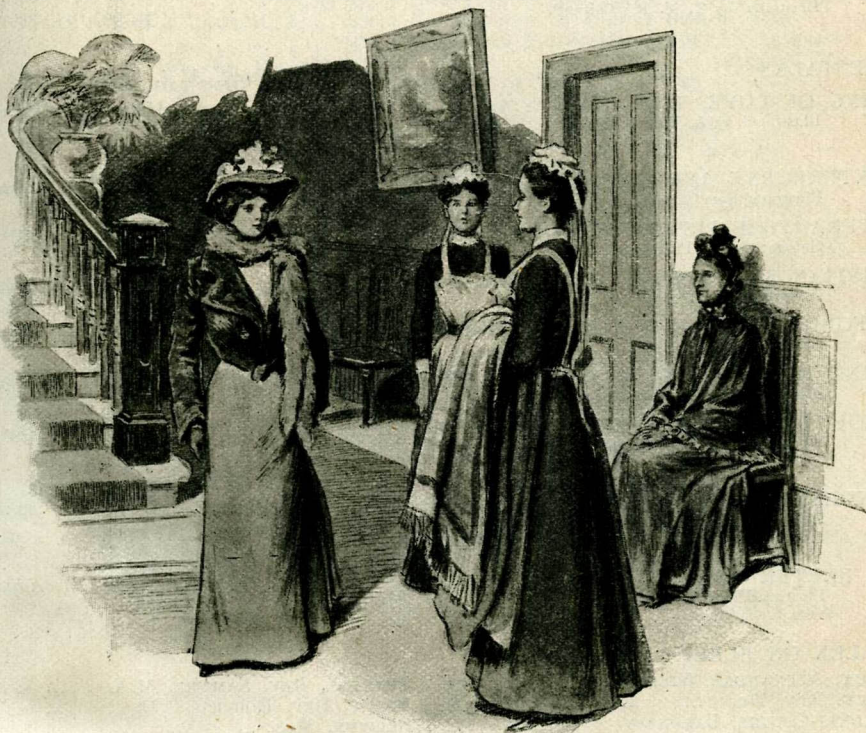
and the short, snapping bark of the Fox. The boy beat vainly against the door, and shook it with all his strength without avail, and at last, by a sudden inspiration, he drew the whistle up from his pocket by the cord and blew it violently. There was a moment's pause, and then the Monkey came tearing around the corner of the road not a minute too soon.

(To be continued.)

THE
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AN ILLUSTRATED FAMILY MONTHLY



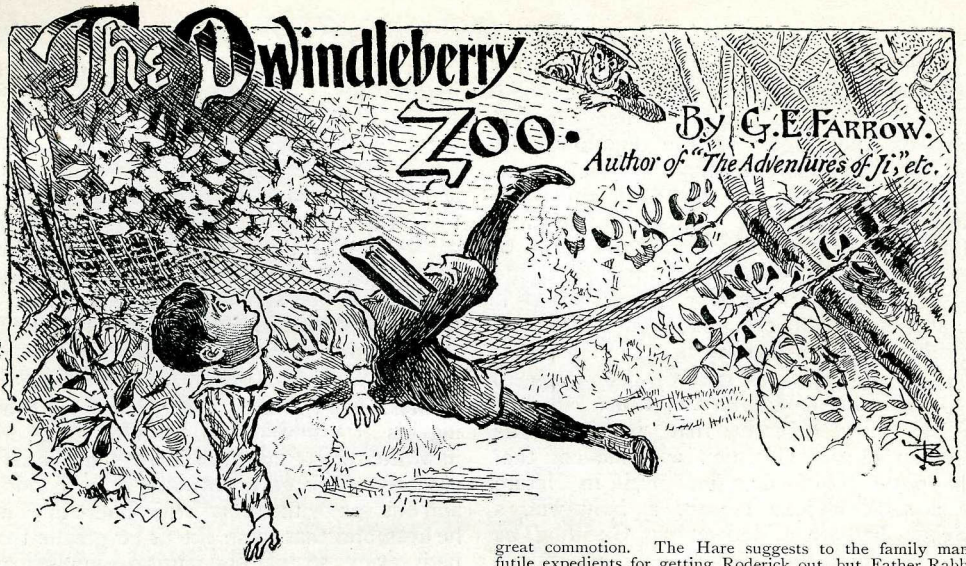
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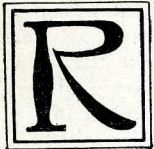
COMMENCED IN THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER.

RODERICK was lying in a hammock in a garden near the Zoo, reading a book on Natural History. A Monkey looks over the wall and invites him to visit the Dwindleberry Zoo. The Monkey gives him a dwindleberry, which makes him so tiny that he can creep through a very small hole behind the ivy. A Beetle is the door-keeper, and his main task seems to be to keep out a Snake, for all the creatures in the Dwindleberry Zoo are under a vow not to harm one another, and the Snake cannot be trusted. After many adventures Roderick goes to a Butterflies' garden party. There comes a rumour that a Snake has got through the Hole in the Wall, and, moreover, Roderick suddenly begins to grow again. The party breaks up in confusion. Roderick goes on the Seaside and Switchback Railway with the Guinea-Pig and Jerboa. A rumour is abroad that a Boy brought the Snake in, and he finds the creatures very hostile. He is saved by a Fishing-Frog. He grows again, and goes for a bath. Two Rabbits steal his clothes. He pursues them, jumps down their hole, and finds himself falling into space. He eventually obtains his clothes, and finds the Rabbit family very friendly. He is introduced to the Squirrel and Dr. Owl. He stays the night with the Rabbits, and at dawn finds that he has grown too big for the room. His leg and foot shoot out of the window, and the whole affair creates

great commotion. The Hare suggests to the family many futile expedients for getting Roderick out, but Father Rabbit sends for Lawyer Fox and Builder Badger. The latter extricates Roderick and the former makes out a long bill of costs. Roderick has no money, and is forced to accompany the Fox, and they meet a Goose going to the fair to sell her eggs. The Fox asks her if she has any *heavy* ones, but she will not tell him. The Fox gives Roderick the task, in order to pay his debts, of following her to the fair and procuring three heavy eggs from her. Roderick hurries away and enters the fair, but the Goose is nowhere to be seen. He goes into one of the booths, and there, amongst a heap of Oriental cushions, he finds—the Snake! The Snake tries to persuade Roderick to make the acquaintance of the Goose, so as to gain control of the vast wealth which she possesses. Roderick refuses and hastens out of the tent. He meets the Monkey and tells of his adventures with the Snake. The Monkey gives Roderick a dwindleberry and tells him to return to the tent and try and persuade the Snake to swallow it. By this means the creature will grow smaller, and one of the birds could then pick him up and drop him over the wall. When Roderick reaches the tent the Snake has gone! Roderick returns to tell the Monkey and encounters Mother Goose. She asks him to direct her to Dr. Owl's home. On the way she gives Roderick a heavy egg from her basket and tells him to break it. Out roll several sovereigns, which the Goose gives to Roderick as a present. After seeing Dr. Owl they pay a visit to Mr. Fox, and there again meet the Snake. Roderick is turned out of the house, and brings the Monkey on the scene by blowing a whistle.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TURKEY'S TAIL.



RODERICK and the Monkey listened for some time outside Lawyer Fox's door, while the noise within still continued. Roderick had told the friendly little animal the whole of the circumstances, and of his fears for the safety of the Goose.

"What can we do?" he asked, in great perplexity. "The door is fastened tightly, and I don't see how we can possibly get in."

The Monkey looked puzzled for an instant. "I think, perhaps, the best thing to do," he began slowly, "is to—— Halloo! here comes Dr. Owl. I wonder what he wants."

The old fellow was trudging along, solemnly, dressed in his best clothes and

carrying a gold-headed cane. He disregarded the bow which the Monkey gave him (perhaps he did not see it) and, stalking up the steps leading to Lawyer Fox's door, gave a loud double knock. There was no reply, and the noise within was redoubled. The Doctor looked greatly surprised, and knocked and rang again.

"I don't think you'll get any answer," said the Monkey. "The Fox has got the Snake in there, and the Goose too. I fancy he don't want anyone else."

"The Snake!" cried Dr. Owl, nearly falling off the steps in his alarm. "What's the Snake doing there?"

"That's what we want to find out. There's two artful ones together."

"And one simple one," said the Doctor, shaking his head; "the poor Goose is simple enough, in all conscience. I'm afraid she'll have a bad time."

"Do you think they'll kill her?" asked Roderick, in alarm.

"Kill a Goose that lays golden eggs!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Not in the least likely. No, they won't kill her, but she'll have a bad time all the same, and they'll feather their nests well out of her, you may depend upon that, unless we prevent it. Er—let's see, have you got that snuff yet?"

"What snuff?" asked Roderick, in surprise.

"I told you when we first met that you would find some snuff useful. You ought to have got some. My advice is always valuable. Snuff at the present moment would help us very greatly. Get some as soon as you can, that's my advice—as soon as you can; it's an excellent thing for throwing dust in anybody's eyes." And after looking up at the windows once or twice, and shaking his head rather anxiously, the old Owl stalked off without another word.



"I DON'T THINK YOU'LL GET ANY ANSWER," SAID THE MONKEY.

"I wonder what he meant about the snuff," said Roderick, when he had gone. "I can't see what possible good that would be."

"I can't see for the moment either," admitted the Monkey. "But Dr. Owl's advice is, as he himself said, always worth following."

"Let's see," he continued, "there's only one person in the place who takes snuff, and that's the Turkey. He's a crotchety old fellow and very conceited; but if we manage to keep the right side of him perhaps he will give you some. At any rate we might try. Come along, I'll take you to him," and linking his arm through Roderick's he led him into the wood at the other side of the roadway.

"It's very difficult to keep step with you," he grumbled, as they walked along the narrow pathway. "You keep taking longer and longer steps each minute."

"I'm afraid," said Roderick, meekly, "that I'm growing again."

"Oh yes, of course," said the Monkey, withdrawing his arm, "that would account for it. Well, in that case, it is not your fault, and I'll say no more about it."

Roderick was thinking in an amused way that it was just as well that he shouldn't, as he certainly couldn't, prevent himself from growing, and he was just wondering when he was going to stop getting taller when they suddenly came upon a very curious couple engaged in conversation.

A Sloth was hanging head downwards from the branches of a tree, and a fussy, anxious-looking Porcupine was fuming and fretting underneath.

"It's such a nuisance," he was saying, "coming just at this time, too. I have just taken a new house and was going to move in next week."

"I don't think," said the Sloth, yawning, and politely covering his mouth with one paw, "that it matters much. Nothing matters much, and a general election more or less is——" and he yawned again, wearily, and waved his paw as much as to say that he dismissed the whole matter from his mind.

"What's that you say?" said the Monkey, eagerly. "General election? Is there going to be a general election?"

"Yes," said the Porcupine; "isn't it rot?"

"But why? Why is it going to take place now?" inquired the Monkey.

"Parliament to meet at once to discuss State matters of great importance," declared the Porcupine, fussily. "I heard it first-hand from the Secretary-Bird. He's getting the notices out at once. Who are you going to vote for?"

"Don't know yet," replied the Monkey, briefly. "Haven't had time to think."

"I always vote for myself," chimed in the Sloth; "it saves bother, and I'm *sure* not to get in again—unless I fall off."

Roderick wondered whatever the creature was talking about, and he must have looked rather surprised, for the Sloth turned his head and stared stupidly at him with vacant, drowsy eyes.

"M.P., you know," he explained, sleepily.

"Member of Parliament," suggested Roderick.

"Oh, no! Just mud-puddle," was the unexpected reply. "I got into one once when I fell off my bough, being too tired to hold on. It's the only thing I'm ever likely to fall into."

"Are you Liberal or Conservative?" asked the Porcupine, suddenly. He had been staring impatiently at the Sloth while he was talking to Roderick, and was evidently anxious to get a word or two in himself.

"Well, I hardly know enough about the matter to be able to say," laughed Roderick.

"Oh! you don't have to know anything about politics to vote. In fact, the less you know about the matter the better," declared the Porcupine.

"Besides, it's very simple," yawned the Sloth. "Liberals are people who always want to alter everything, and Conservatives are those who want them always to stop as they are. One is as bad as the other; there's not a ha'p'orth to choose between 'em."

The Sloth yawned again (till Roderick felt quite alarmed lest his head should "come in two," as he described it), then, suddenly shutting his eyes, he began to snore, as a gentle hint that he would prefer to be alone.

"Well, I must be off, I suppose," said the Porcupine, scratching on the ground with his quills as he fussed about putting on his gloves and straightening his coat. "This election will throw all my work in disorder; beastly nuisance—beastly nuisance!" and with a hurried nod, which included both Roderick and the Monkey, he scuttled off into the wood.

The boy and his friend continued their journey in silence for some time, and then Roderick asked what the general election was for.

"Why, didn't you hear him say that Parliament is to reassemble? It's a Parliamentary election. I shall put up for it. Ah, yes, by the way, so will you, I suppose? Most people do, and curiously enough most of them get in."

"How many members are there, then?" asked Roderick.

"Oh, several hundred," declared the Monkey. "It's a very fine sight when the king attends in state to open the proceedings."

"Who is the king here, please?" inquired Roderick.

"The Lion, of course—Leo II." explained the monkey. "He's a grand old fellow. We're all very proud of him, and he's greatly beloved and respected; but here we are at last—and there's the very person we're looking for. Now then—best behaviour, please. The Turkey is the most particular person about deportment in the Zoo."

A very neatly-appointed house stood a little way back from the pathway, and before it stretched a velvety well-kept lawn, gay with a border of bright flowers.

Strutting up and down, and gobbling with self-importance, was the Turkey himself. A glass in one eye, a tall hat, an enormous red frilled stock, white waistcoat, and gold-headed stick, gracefully balanced by a silken cord from one pinion, while with the other he sported a jewelled snuff-box, all tended to make him appear a very magnificent person indeed. He paused when he saw them, and, after carefully adjusting his eye-glass, he gracefully shook his wattle to the other side of his beak and strutted towards them with a grand air. "Ha! h'm! How do you do, Monkey?" he said, making a profound bow. "Charmed to see you. You've no doubt come to offer me your vote for the coming election. I am putting up, of course. Ah! h'm! Merely as a matter of course. I'm bound to be elected whoever else is unsuccessful. They need me in the House, especially now, since they're going to have Labour candidates. You've heard of that, of course?"

"N—no, I can't say that I have," replied the Monkey.

"Fact, I assure you. Most disgusting state of affairs. I hear the Mole actually is putting up, and the Beaver—quite common working men. I can't think what we're coming to. You're voting, of course?"

"Oh, yes," replied the Monkey; "and putting up, too. Have you promised your vote yet?"

"N—no. I can't say that I have," was

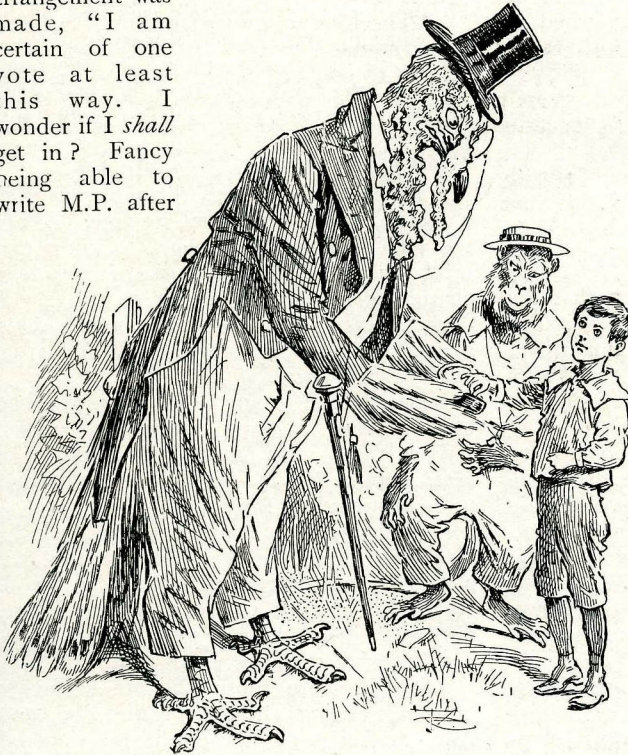
the rather reluctant reply. "I—er—am rather waiting to—er——"

"My friend here will be pleased to exchange votes with you, I'm sure," said the Monkey.

"De—lighted, I'm sure," remarked the Turkey, giving Roderick a most graceful bow.

The Monkey introduced them to each other, and it was soon arranged that Roderick should promise his vote to the Turkey and that the Turkey should return the compliment and vote for him.

"Come," thought Roderick, after this arrangement was made, "I am certain of one vote at least this way. I wonder if I *shall* get in? Fancy being able to write M.P. after



"HA! H'M! MAY I OFFER YOU A PINCH?"

my name. Won't the fellows stare when I get back to school?"

"Ha! h'm! May I offer you a pinch?" said a voice at his elbow, and Roderick quite started as a jewelled snuff-box was thrust under his nose.

He suddenly realized, however, that here, at last, was an opportunity of carrying out the Owl's advice and possessing himself of some snuff. "I will take a pinch, if you please," he said, "but, if you don't mind, I'll use it presently," and he helped himself to a generous pinch, which he carefully stowed away in an old envelope which he fortunately found in his pocket.

"Pray take some more," cried the Turkey, generously. "You're quite welcome," and he poured half of the contents of the box into the envelope.

"Thank you! Thank you! That's quite sufficient," protested Roderick; "I really only wanted a little."

"That's all right, my dear sir; I like you and I'm very pleased to be able to supply you with some. It's so seldom that I find anyone here willing to take snuff with me. A-tish-oo! a-tish-oooh!" and the Turkey gobbled and sneezed till he turned quite purple in the face.

At this minute the Capybara came in sight accompanied by the Toucan. "H'm!" cried the latter, when they caught sight of the party, "here he is again"—evidently referring to Roderick. "I wonder what mischief he is up to now. I wonder if the Turkey knows who and what he is," said the Toucan. "I've a great mind to tell him," he added, spitefully.

He was just coming forward when the Turkey, strutting towards him, welcomed him and the Capybara effusively. "I am sure," he said, "you've come to offer me your votes."

"What are you, Conservative or Liberal?" inquired the Capybara, cautiously.

"My dear sir, *what* a question! Conservative, of course!"

"That settles it," said the Toucan, jingling some coins in his pocket. "We've been paid money—lots of money—to only vote for Liberals."

"Money!" cried the Turkey; "you surprise me—

what is it like?"

The Toucan pulled a bright new sovereign from his pocket and handed it over for inspection.

"Who gave it to you?" demanded the Monkey.

"Lawyer Fox," said the Capybara grandly, "and he promised us some more for every vote we got——"

"Oh, ho!" cried the Monkey, aside to Roderick, "that's his little game, is it? He's going to try and get all the votes for his party, so that they will be very strong and able to carry all the measures in Parliament."

"The Lawyer is going around," explained the Toucan, "paying everybody some of these coins for voting for him or his party."

"How many did you get?" asked Roderick.

"Three each," was the reply.

The boy considered for a minute. "I'll give you each five to vote for this gentleman," he said pointing to the Turkey.

"Can we keep the three we have already?" asked the Capybara, greedily.

"Oh, yes, if you like," agreed the two creatures.

"That's all right then," said Roderick, handing over the money.

And so the Turkey got two more votes promised.

"What's that noise?" cried the Monkey, suddenly, and they all turned quickly around just in time to see Lawyer Fox slinking hurriedly away through the trees.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CROCODILE'S TAIL.

"I WONDER," said Roderick, "what the old Fox was doing hanging about here?"

"Listening to what we were talking about, probably," replied the Monkey. "He's very sly and artful, and one never can tell what he will be up to next."

"Well, at all events, he won't be able to prevent me from being elected," declared the Turkey, with satisfaction. "I have already secured sufficient votes to be sure of that. And now—er—I'm sorry you must be going. Sure I can't persuade you to stop?"

Roderick thought this was rather a funny remark, since no one had made any suggestion about having to go.

"Oh, I don't think we need hurry, thank you," said the Monkey.

"Don't mention it! Don't think of stopping on my account. Good-bye, good-bye," hurriedly cried the Turkey, bustling them out of the gate. "Good-bye! Oh, by the way, will anybody have a pinch of snuff before they go?" and he held out his box invitingly. The Toucan and the Capybara both took some and, having said good-bye, went off in a fit of sneezing, followed by Roderick and the Monkey, the Turkey watching them from the gate as they walked off into the forest again.

They had proceeded but a little way before they came across a very busy-looking bird, with some quill pens stuck behind his ear (as it seemed), and a large packet of papers under one pinion.

"Can't stop!" he cried, as he hurried past

them. "Got all these voting papers to deliver. Oh, by the by," he added, turning back, "you may as well have yours now, it will save having to leave it at your place. Let's see, Monkey, you spell it with an 'M,' I think, don't you? M—M—M. Ah, here we are. Got yours?" he added, turning to Roderick.

"No, not yet," replied he.

"What's your name?" inquired the bird.

"Roderick," was the reply.

"He's a boy," explained the Monkey.

"Oh, is he? Ah, I've heard about him. He's a friend of the Snake's, isn't he?"

"Certainly not!" cried Roderick.

"H'm! I heard you were, at any rate," declared the bird. "However, it doesn't matter. You won't be able to vote, anyhow."

"Why not?" inquired the Monkey.

"He hasn't a tail," was the reply, given in a decided voice. "No tail, no vote. That's the qualification. You ought to know that by this time. But, there, I mustn't stop here chattering all day. I've got to deliver all these papers. Don't forget the polling takes place this afternoon at three," and he started off in a great hurry.

"Here!" called out the Monkey, who had been carefully reading his polling paper. "What does this mean? '*Snakeite* or *Anti-Snakeite*?' It's one of the questions to be answered on the paper."

"Oh, haven't you heard?" called back the bird over its shoulder. "They're the new names of the different sides. There are to be no Liberals or Conservatives in future, only Snakeites and Anti-Snakeites!"

"But what do those words mean?"

"Snakeites are those who are in favour of snakes being allowed in the Zoo, and Anti-Snakeites are those who are opposed to them. Read your paper, you'll see," and the bird hurried off in a great fluster.

"H'm," said the Monkey, sitting down and reading the polling paper carefully. "This is very extraordinary, and I am afraid it means mischief. We shall have to act very carefully indeed. We must persuade as many of the animals as we possibly can to vote for the Anti-Snakeites or we shall have to put up with that old Snake in here always, and in *that* case nobody's life would be safe for a day. Look here! You go one way, and I'll go the other, and we'll meet at the poll at three o'clock. In the meantime, you persuade every animal or bird that you meet to vote for the Anti-Snakeites. Now I'll be off. Do your best!" and the Monkey rushed

away, leaving Roderick alone. He felt quite excited at the prospect of being present at an election, and most important at being asked to try and persuade people to vote in the right way, and started off in high spirits, wondering who would be the first person he would meet.

He noticed with satisfaction that he had been steadily growing, and that he had now practically returned to his usual size. This gave him greater courage, and when he presently came to a narrow river and saw on the bank a log hut, and a Crocodile sitting outside it, puzzling through a pair of spectacles over a paper, which Roderick had no difficulty in recognising as being a similar one to that which the Monkey had received, he went up to the creature without hesitation and, in as pleasant a voice as he could assume, politely wished him "Good day!"

The Crocodile dropped the paper and the spectacles from his nose at the same time. "Bless me! How you startled me!" he exclaimed, fretfully. "As if it wasn't enough to have had that old Lawyer Fox here, giving me money and things for making all sorts of promises that I don't understand in the least how to carry out; and then the Secretary-Bird bringing me this paper, which is a regular Chinese puzzle—but now you must come here bothering. What do you want?" And the Crocodile picked up his spectacles and stared at Roderick curiously.

"I've come to ask who you are going to vote for," said Roderick, pleasantly, "because——"

The Crocodile smiled—a large, artful smile. "Because you want me to vote for you, I suppose?" he said. "Well, what will you give me if I do? The Fox, who was here just now, gave me some money, and said I must vote for a Snakeite, whatever that may be. Are *you* a Snakeite? Because if you are I'll vote for you; it will save me the trouble of having to find another one. If you're an Anti-Snakeite I sha'n't vote for you, of course."

Roderick was just going to indignantly protest that he was *not* a Snakeite when he suddenly remembered what the Monkey had said about their having to be very careful to get all the votes that they could for their side, and he argued to himself that if he could only get the Crocodile

to vote for him the vote would be wasted; for, of course, if the animals wouldn't even let him have a vote himself because he hadn't a tail, they certainly would not allow him to be elected; so he let the Crocodile imagine that he was a Snakeite, and after a very little persuasion he managed to get him to promise to vote for him.

"You'll have to call for me," said the Crocodile, pointing to a crutch and a stick which stood against the side of the hut, "for I'm very lame, and should never be able to get to the poll by myself."

So Roderick promised to return before three, and then hurried off to see what success he could have with the other animals.

He was fortunate enough to secure the votes of an interesting Ant-Eater, a Pelican, and a Red River Hog, and, after a lot of persuasion, got a half promise from a Yak, who said that if the weather was fine he should vote, and if not he would stop at home. He was suffering from gout in the hoof, and was consequently not in the best of tempers.

Roderick got into hot water with an elderly and garrulous Cuckoo by asking for her vote,



"THEY CAME ACROSS A VERY BUSY-LOOKING BIRD, WITH SOME QUILL PENS BEHIND HIS EAR."

for it appeared that, not being a householder, she was not entitled to one at all, and this was quite a sore point with her. She raved and stormed at Roderick as though he was responsible for the fact, and he was very glad to hurry away from her scolding voice, and her threats to hold a demonstration at the poll on behalf of Cuckoos' rights.

The time seemed to be passing very quickly, and Roderick felt that he ought to be hurrying back for the Crocodile. He was just counting over the promises he had received from creatures who had promised to vote for the Anti-Snakeites, and had discovered,

Muffins and—— I beg your pardon. Haste to the poll!"

He just glanced at Roderick, and then, before the boy could speak, off he jumped again.

"Oyez! Oyez! Haste to the muffins and crump—— I beg your pardon. Haste to the poll!" and so on till he was out of sight and hearing.

Roderick found out afterwards that he was the town crier, but that, his services not often being required, he filled up his time by selling muffins and crumpets, hence his rather mixed cry on this occasion. Roderick had heard enough to convince him that it was time for him to hurry back to the Crocodile, and he found that worthy creature anxiously awaiting him ready dressed and leaning on his crutch, with the important voting paper tightly clutched in his hand.

"Come along," he cried; "we shall be late. I'm quite anxious to vote, and Lawyer Fox will be so angry with me if I don't do so."

Roderick didn't attempt to offer any excuse, but just gave his arm for the Crocodile to lean upon, and off they started. There was no need to ask the way, for the road was crowded with animals "hasting to the poll." The Beaver and the Mole, and one or two other old acquaintances of Roderick's, nodded as they passed.

"Labour candidates," sniffed the Crocodile. "They shouldn't be allowed in Parliament; what should they know about matters of State, I should like to know? However, they're pretty sure to be Snakeites, that's one good thing."

A moment later a very curious couple passed, it was the Cuckoo and a Hermit-Crab; the latter was crawling painfully along dragging his house with him, and the Cuckoo was walking slowly by his side and haranguing violently on the subject of Cuckoos' rights.

The Hermit-Crab was listening with great interest, for, as Roderick heard him explain, he was growing *much* too big for his present shell, and until he found another he was not quite sure whether he should be considered a householder or not himself, and consequently whether he should be entitled to a vote.

"We'll make them give us one!" shouted the Cuckoo, violently. "They are not going to tread upon *me*, I can tell you; and if they



"THE CROCODILE WAS PUZZLING OVER A PAPER."

to his great delight, that he could rely upon ten, while three more had partially promised, and he was thinking how pleased the Monkey would be with him, when he heard a hand-bell ringing, and an instant later a Kangaroo jumped into sight. He was carrying a bell in one paw and in his other he held a paper from which he was reading.

"Oyez! Oyez!" he cried. "Haste to the poll! The voting is now about to take place under the King's Oak. No one will be allowed to vote after half-past three!

don't give you a vote come and join my demonstration."

While they had been listening perforce to the Cuckoo's noisy talking Roderick noticed that they were gradually drawing near to the poll. A great spreading oak tree stood in the middle of a meadow, which was crowded with all sorts of birds and animals, all talking most excitedly in groups of twos and threes. He was staring about him curiously when he felt a tap on the arm, and hastily turning around he beheld the Turkey, more pompous and amiable than ever.

"Ah!" he cried. "Here you—ah—h'm—are. Coming to vote for me! Of course. Very proper, very right. Not, of course—ah—h'm—that there is the slightest chance of my *not* getting in. I always do! Ah! h'm! and always shall." And the Turkey gobbled twice or thrice and then took a big pinch of snuff.

Roderick thought he ought to tell him at once what the Secretary-Bird had told him about his not having a vote because he hadn't a tail, and to his great relief the Turkey did not seem in the least displeased.

"One vote," said he, grandly, "more or less—ah! h'm!—will not make the slightest difference."

Just then the Monkey came hurrying up, and was quite delighted when Roderick told him how successful he had been in securing votes. "I've been fortunate, too," said he; "I don't think we need have any fear but that our side will get in. What are you doing with the Crocodile, though? I've heard he's a strong Snakeite."

Roderick whispered into the Monkey's ear, how that he had got the Crocodile to promise to vote for him, in order to save the vote going to the other side. In the meantime Lawyer Fox had arrived on the scene, and was running from one to another of the animals, whispering to one, winking knowingly at another, and talking persuasively to others. Roderick could see that he was engaged very earnestly with the Toucan and the Capybara, and also that the Crocodile had joined their party.

The Lawyer seemed very highly amused about something, and laughed heartily when the Crocodile whispered in his ear. Roderick wondered whatever it could be, and he was very soon to find out.

The bell rang again, and the Kangaroo,

standing under the king's oak tree, began to cry out again. "Oyez! Oyez! Haste to the muf—I beg your pardons—the poll! All the polling papers must now be put into the box filled in with the names of the candidates whom you wish to elect. *Lead pencils one guinea each!* Haste to the crumpets—I beg your pardons! Haste to the poll."

"Lead pencils one guinea each!" cried the Monkey and several other animals, in dismay. "I've never heard of such a thing! Has



"OYEZ! OYEZ!" HE
CRIED. "HASTE TO
THE POLL!"

anyone a guinea to lend me? I've come away without my purse."

"I've never had a guinea in my life," cried another. "We've never wanted money here before for anything."

Roderick felt in his pockets, intending to share his money as far as it would go around, but found to his great distress that he had been robbed. There was not a single coin left in any of his pockets.

Lawyer Fox was rushing about distributing guineas or pencils to all of his friends, who were, of course, all ardent Snakeites, and the Anti-Snakeites were doing their best to get their papers signed with the only pencil

which one of their number happened to have in his pocket.

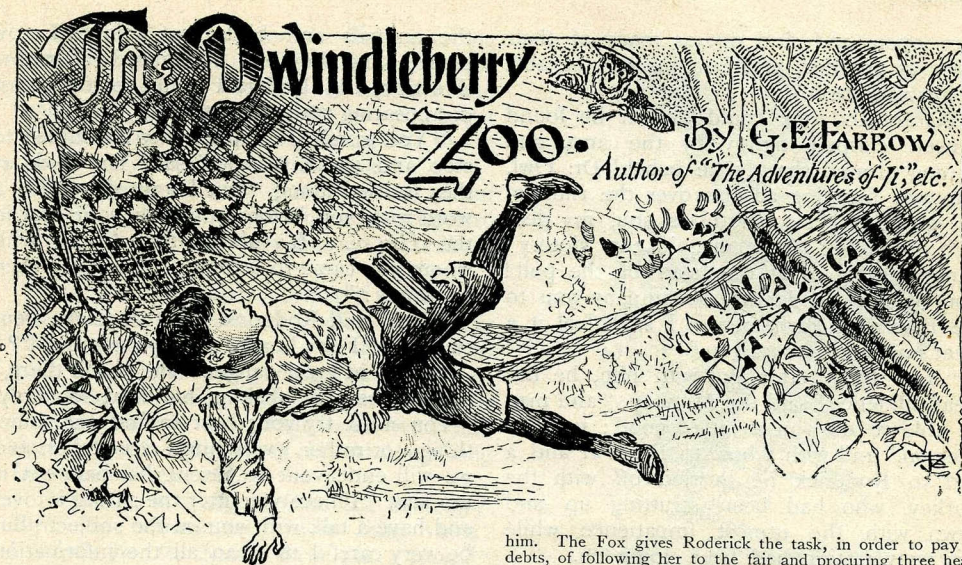
The half-hour allowed for filling up the papers seemed to pass all too quickly, and on the Anti-Snakeite side not one-half had been completed when the bell rang again and the Kangaroo announced that the poll was closed.

The Secretary-Bird gathered together all the papers and retired with the scrutineers to count the votes.

It was an anxious time for everyone, and Snakeites and Anti-Snakeites walked about talking to each other in whispers.

At last, after what seemed an interminable length of time, the bell rang again and the Secretary-Bird announced, amidst breathless silence, that the Snakeites had got in by an enormous majority, and that *Roderick was at the head of the poll on the Snakeite side!*

(To be continued.)



SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

COMMENCED IN THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER.

RODERICK was lying in a hammock in a garden near the Zoo, reading a book on Natural History. A Monkey looks over the wall and invites him to visit the Dwindleberry Zoo. The Monkey gives him a dwindleberry, which makes him so tiny that he can creep through a very small hole behind the ivy. A Beetle is the door-keeper, and his main task seems to be to keep out a Snake, for all the creatures in the Dwindleberry Zoo are under a vow not to harm one another, and the Snake cannot be trusted. After many adventures Roderick goes to a Butterflies' garden party. There comes a rumour that a Snake has got through the Hole in the Wall, and, moreover, Roderick suddenly begins to grow again. The party breaks up in confusion. Roderick goes on the Seaside and Switchback Railway with the Guinea-Pig and Jerboa. A rumour is abroad that a Boy brought the Snake in, and he finds the creatures very hostile. He is saved by a Fishing-Frog. He grows again, and goes for a bathe. Two Rabbits steal his clothes. He pursues them, jumps down their hole, and finds himself falling into space. He eventually obtains his clothes, and finds the Rabbit family very friendly. He is introduced to the Squirrel and Dr. Owl. He stays the night with the Rabbits, and at dawn finds that he has grown too big for the room. His leg and foot shoot out of the window, and the whole affair creates great commotion. The Hare suggests to the family many futile expedients for getting Roderick out, but Father Rabbit sends for Lawyer Fox and Builder Badger. The latter extricates Roderick and the former makes out a long bill of costs. Roderick has no money, and is forced to accompany the Fox, and they meet a Goose going to the fair to sell her eggs. The Fox asks her if she has any *heavy* ones, but she will not tell

him. The Fox gives Roderick the task, in order to pay his debts, of following her to the fair and procuring three heavy eggs from her. Roderick hurries away and enters the fair, but the Goose is nowhere to be seen. He goes into one of the booths, and there, amongst a heap of Oriental cushions, he finds—the Snake! The Snake tries to persuade Roderick to make the acquaintance of the Goose, so as to gain control of the vast wealth which she possesses. Roderick refuses and hastens out of the tent. He meets the Monkey and tells of his adventures with the Snake. The Monkey gives Roderick a dwindleberry and tells him to return to the tent and try and persuade the Snake to swallow it. By this means the creature will grow smaller, and one of the birds could then pick him up and drop him over the wall. When Roderick reaches the tent the Snake has gone! Roderick returns to tell the Monkey and encounters Mother Goose. She asks him to direct her to Dr. Owl's home. On the way she gives Roderick a heavy egg from her basket and tells him to break it. Out roll several sovereigns, which the Goose gives to Roderick as a present. After seeing Dr. Owl they pay a visit to Mr. Fox, and there again meet the Snake. Roderick is turned out of the house, and brings the Monkey on the scene by blowing a whistle. Roderick tells the Monkey the whole of the circumstances, and of his fears for the safety of the Goose. They cannot gain admission to the house, as the door is securely fastened. The Monkey proposes a visit to the Turkey, and on their way they meet several animals who are busy discussing a General Election which is to take place. The Turkey welcomes Roderick and the Monkey, and asks if they have come to give him their votes. Roderick offers to exchange votes with the Turkey, but afterwards learns that he cannot vote because he has no tail. The parties are termed Snakeites and Anti-Snakeites, the former in favour of Snakes being admitted into the Zoo, the latter opposed to that idea. Roderick, although an Anti-Snakeite, induces several Snakeites to vote for him, thinking their votes will thus be wasted, but to his amazement the Secretary-Bird announces that *he is at the head of the Poll on the Snakeite side!*

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FOX'S TAIL.



ONE was more astounded than Roderick. How could it have been possible for him to have got all those votes? He looked about, and saw foes and friends alike staring at him in surprise and indignation.

"Deceitful creature!" exclaimed the Turkey, gobbling in his excitement so that his words could hardly be understood. "He promised me his vote too, and pretended that he was an Anti-Snakeite. It's disgraceful!"

The Monkey, too, came up to him in a great fury, his teeth chattering with rage. "I should like to *shake* you," he said. "Oh, it's outrageous! A pretty muddle you've made of things."

"You told me to prevent as many animals as possible from voting for the Snakeites, and so I got all the Snakeites I could to vote for me, because I had no idea that *I* should be allowed to enter Parliament at all," explained Roderick; "and I thought, of course, that the votes would be wasted."

"Well, the only thing to be done now," said the Monkey, after considering for a moment, "is to go in with them, keep your

eyes open, and find out as many of their plans as possible, and then we may be able to frustrate them."

Before Roderick could answer he found himself clasped tightly by the arm, and turning around sharply he beheld Dr. Owl, who was beaming at him over the rims of his glasses. "I congratulate you, my dear sir," said he. "A magnificent victory! Fancy getting in at the head of the poll! You must really let me accompany you to the House of Parliament. I shall feel it a great honour, I assure you."

"You had better go with him, he has great influence," said the Monkey, "and may be able to do you a lot of good; see you later on," and with a bow to Dr. Owl and a nod to Roderick he hurried off with the Turkey, who had been strutting up and down with the utmost impatience while this conversation had been going on.

"When does Parliament begin, then?" inquired Roderick.

"At once, of course!" replied Dr. Owl, briskly. "Come! we must hurry; don't you see all the others have already started?"

It was quite true. There had been an immense amount of chattering amongst

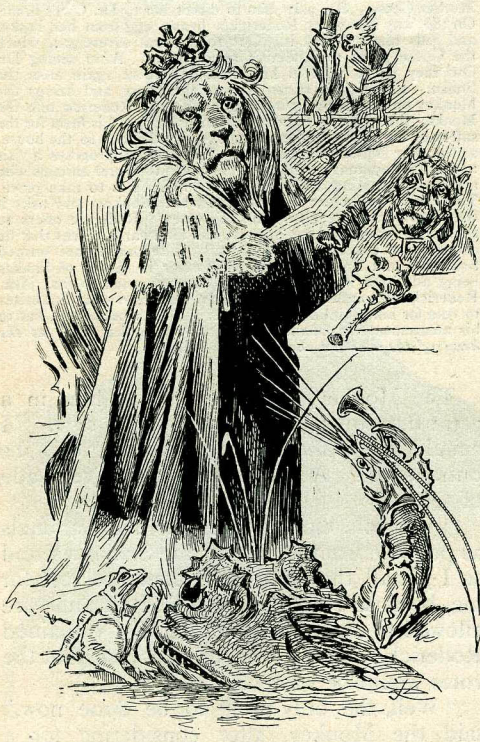
the animals and birds, but this had now ceased, and they had all hurried off in one direction, and Roderick could see them just disappearing among the trees.

"You wonder, I expect, why I troubled to stop and speak to you," said Dr. Owl, as they hurried along, "but I wanted to have a word with you before you took your seat in the House. It's about that Goose with whom you came to see me. Have you seen her lately?"

"No," said Roderick, "not since she went to Lawyer Fox's house. Why do you ask?"

"She's in great danger if she is still there," replied the Owl, shaking his head solemnly. "You must try your best to find out something—or rather, everything—about her, and we will endeavour to rescue her before it is too late. I'll see you after the sitting is over and have a talk with you on the subject; but be very careful to glean all the information you can. Here we are. *You* must enter by the members' door, I am going up into the Strangers' Gallery. I love to be in a dark corner by myself and look on without being seen. Good-bye. Be careful!" And Dr. Owl hurried up the gallery steps, while Roderick, with a certain sense of nervousness, entered by the members' door. A loud noise of cheering in all sorts of voices, from the growls of the larger animals to the shrill cries of the birds and small creatures, burst upon his ear as he opened the door. At first he thought they were cheering him, but a moment later he could perceive that it was a very grand-looking personage making his entrance from another door who was the cause of this wild commotion.

A very noble-looking Lion, dressed in full regalia and wearing a crown, strode majestically to a raised dais and seated himself on a throne, after having bowed right and left to the assembled company. There was a moment's pause, and Roderick had time to slip quietly into a seat and look about him. He found the great hall was entirely filled from floor to ceiling with all sorts of animals, birds, and insects, while surrounding the throne was a kind of pond, in which his old friend the Fishing-Frog, with several others of his species, was looking quite at home, and the Lobster, who was rather hard of hearing, had an ear-trumpet, which he held constantly to his ear when anyone was speaking. All the fishes and semi-aquatic creatures, Roderick found out afterwards, were more or less deaf, and that was why they were accommodated with positions near the throne.



"THE KING UNDOID THE ROLL AND BEGAN TO READ IN A LOW MUMBLING VOICE."

There were perches for the birds reaching from end to end of the hall, and rising tier above tier. The smaller animals had seats just beyond the pond, and the larger creatures stood at the back, being able to see comfortably over the others' heads.

The Secretary-Bird was bustling about near the throne and speaking in a whisper to various officials who were dressed in brilliant uniforms.

One in particular attracted Roderick's attention. It was a very clumsy-looking Hippopotamus in a brown suit, trimmed with gold braid. He was puffing and blowing as he waddled about, pushing those animals unceremoniously into their seats who had risen to catch a glimpse of His Majesty King Leo when he entered.

Presently, at a signal from the Secretary-Bird, he commanded, in a loud voice: "*Silence for the Speech from the Throne!*" and immediately you might have heard a pin fall.

The King rose majestically from his seat, and the Secretary-Bird fussed about, officiously arranging the velvet and ermine cloak which hung from the royal shoulders.

An elderly Jak, with a cold, and walking slightly lame, struggled up the steps with a large roll of paper. This he presented to the King with a low bow, and then went back to his seat, coughing and wheezing painfully.

The King undid the roll and immediately began to read very hurriedly in a low mumbly voice, which sounded more like a growl than anything else, a long speech, of which Roderick felt convinced nobody in the hall heard a single word.

Immediately he had finished, the Jak struggled up to the throne again, received the roll from the King's hands, and began to walk backwards to his seat, bowing respectfully at intervals. Unfortunately, however, he tripped over the Monkey's tail, which that creature had thoughtlessly allowed to stretch along the floor, and with a great clatter and an outcry of voices came sprawling to the ground. Roderick, who had been greatly interested and amused at the comical attempt at dignity with which the Jak had been trying to fulfil his duties, could not help a smile when he saw him fall. His face grew serious, however, as he caught sight of the Crocodile, who sat next to him, glaring angrily.

"Unfeeling wretch!" said that creature, below his breath; "there's nothing to laugh at that I can see."

"Pah! What else can you expect from a



"THE COCKATOO BUSTLED ON TO THE DAIS, AND BEGAN TO SPEAK IN A SHRILL VOICE."

boy?" chimed in a voice overhead, and, looking up, Roderick saw the Toucan peering down at him contemptuously. "I always disapproved of you, from the beginning," continued that unfriendly bird, making a dab at him with his clumsy beak.

"Silence!" called out the Hippopotamus, in an angry tone of voice.

The King, who had gathered up his robes preparatory to taking his departure, turned around and fastened his eyes on Roderick. "Who—or what is *that*?" he growled.

A number of voices at once cried out, "A boy, your Majesty!—a boy!"

King Leo gazed curiously at him for an instant, and then bent down and whispered something to the Secretary-Bird, who bowed low and answered, "Certainly, your Majesty," after which the King stalked with great dignity out of the hall amid the acclamations of his subjects.

He had no sooner gone than the Cockatoo flew down with a great fuss and bustle on to the dais, and immediately began to speak very quickly and in a shrill voice. "Now that we have got rid of him," said the bird, insolently jerking one claw towards the door through which the King had vanished, "let's get at once to business. I am here to demand that everyone shall have a vote, and everyone with a vote shall be allowed to—"

"And I am here to demand votes for women!" screamed the Cuckoo, flying down beside him. "Votes for women! Votes for women! Why should we spend all our time in making nests and bringing up families?"

I for one feel called to higher things, and refuse to——”

She was interrupted with loud, angry cries from all over the House. “Silence!” “Turn her out!” “You’ve no right to speak!” “Turn them both out!” And amidst the greatest of confusion several animals sprang forward to the assistance of the Hippopotamus and the Secretary-Bird, and, screaming violently, “One bird, one vote,” and “Votes for women,” the two excited birds were ejected and the door closed and bolted.



“THE TURKEY STRUTTED POMPOUSLY ON TO THE DAIS.”

After this disturbing scene it took everybody some time to settle down into their places, and at last the Secretary-Bird announced from the dais that the proper proceedings for the day would commence with a speech from A. Turkey, Esq., A.S.

There was slight applause from a few Anti-Snakeites, who were evidently largely in the minority, as the Turkey strutted pompously on to the dais. He bowed and adjusted his glass, and then, after a preliminary cough, began: “Quadrupeds, feathered fowls, and other creatures, it is first my pleasurable duty to propose a loyal vote of thanks to his most gracious Majesty King Leo for the most eloquent and

illuminating speech from the Throne with which His Majesty deigned to open Parliament. You must all of you agree to the entire truth and justice of every remark which fell from the royal lips——”

“We didn’t hear any,” objected a Labour Member—probably the Mole, who dearly loved a disturbance of any kind. The Hippopotamus went over and, after a short argument, persuaded him to behave himself, and the Turkey proceeded.

“Er—er—having discharged this pleasurable duty, I have now a very painful task to perform. It is known to most of you that two very dangerous and objectionable strangers have managed somehow to gain an entrance to our most exclusive kingdom, the Dwindleberry Zoo. One is that most undesirable and objectionable of all creatures—a boy. A defective biped, my dear friends, absolutely without a tail to his back—of him, more later. The other is a most dangerous and fearsome reptile called a Snake. Some of you have seen him, some of you have not, but I warn you——”

Here he was interrupted by feeble cheers from the Anti-Snakeites and hisses and groans from the Snakeites, which, however, changed to cheers and hurrahs as, at this dramatic moment, Lawyer Fox was seen to enter escorting no less a personage than the Snake himself, who writhed gracefully into a seat, darting brilliant and fascinating glances into every part of the House.

The Hippopotamus, who had been anxiously glancing at his watch, now went up to the Turkey and announced: “The time is up. The five-minutes limit to all speeches comes into force to-day. No one is allowed to speak for more than five minutes at a time.”

The Turkey began an indignant protest, but it was of no avail, and, although he declared that he had not half finished what he had to say, the enraged bird had to step down.

There was a burst of cheers from the Snakeites as Lawyer Fox took his place, and immediately a silence followed in which the Fox’s thin persuasive voice could be distinctly heard. “Fellow creatures,” he began, smiling right and left in an easy way, “we are here to-day to repair a great injustice! For too long we have allowed blind prejudice to lead us, and for some strange and superstitious reason we have declined to allow a fellow creature who might be and will prove himself to be our greatest friend,

to become one of us, and dwell amid the happy conditions which prevail in this kingdom. Why, why, I ask, have we so long excluded one who has everything to recommend him? Beauty (the Snake bowed), great and noble abilities (the Snake bowed again), and, above all, wealth (the Snake gazed fixedly at Lawyer Fox and nodded his head in affirmation). Wealth, my dear friends, which, despite your distrust of him and your studied unkindness, he is ready—nay, anxious—to share with you——”

Here the Fox was interrupted by loud cheers from all sides. “The Snake,” he resumed, when the noise had somewhat subsided, “has managed without our aid to gain an entrance here, and now he begs you all to admit him to full fellowship; and as an earnest of his good-will to you, one and all, he proposes—and here the Fox paused impressively—“to make you each a present of *one hundred golden sovereigns.*”

There was a moment's breathless pause, and then such a clamour arose as had never before been heard in that place. While the noise was going on two elephants, a camel, a dromedary, an ox, a horse, and a donkey made their way up to the dais, each heavily laden with strong sacks and bags. These were deposited on the dais beside Lawyer Fox; the Snake wriggled up to him and undid one of the sacks, and from it produced some smaller bags, each of which contained a hundred pounds. The animals and other creatures then passed before the dais one by one, and to each was handed, to their great delight, one of the bags.

This had been going on for some time, when Roderick suddenly heard the Fox whisper to the Snake, “There's not quite enough to go round; we shall want ten more bags, at least.”

“Give the Kangaroo the key of your house, and send him round for some more. He's safe, and can be trusted.” And immediately afterwards the Kangaroo, having been privately instructed by the Fox, left the building, and Roderick, thinking that perhaps he would gain some useful information, hurried out after him.

The Kangaroo went hopping off at a rare rate, and Roderick soon realized that it was hopeless to think of catching him up, and was just about to retrace his steps, when he saw Dr. Owl hurrying towards him. “I saw you leave the House,” panted the Owl, “and came out to hear the news.”

Roderick told him about the Kangaroo being sent to the Fox's house for more

gold, and Dr. Owl seemed greatly interested. “Let's follow him,” said he, at length; “we may be able to get in and find out what has become of the Goose.”

Roderick agreed, and they were soon hurrying as hard as they could towards Lawyer Fox's house. They had not quite reached there, however, when they met the Kangaroo returning. He had several bags of gold in his pouch, and was puffing and blowing at every jump. “Phew! they are heavy,” he panted, pausing and mopping his forehead with his handkerchief when he got up to them; “but I must hurry off, I'm to have another five pounds if I get back within the half-hour,” and he sprang up again and was soon well on his way.

Roderick looked after him, and when he had gone some little distance uttered a cry of delight and, hurrying forward, picked up something from the ground.

“What is it?” shouted Dr. Owl.

Roderick waved the article which he had found, and called out, triumphantly, “It's the key of Lawyer Fox's house; the Kangaroo dropped it out of his pouch!”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PIG'S TAIL.

“THAT'S very lucky!” exclaimed Dr. Owl, taking the key which Roderick had found. “We'll go at once and see if we can find the Goose, and rescue her if possible.”

They knew by the distance they had travelled that Lawyer Fox's house could not be far away, and very soon they came in sight of it. It took but a moment to unlock the door, and presently they were searching one room after another for the poor Goose, who, they felt sure, must be hidden there somewhere. After carefully looking in every possible likely place, however, they were about to give up in despair, when suddenly the Owl stooped down and picked up something bright from the floor. It was a golden coin. Just near the spot where he had found it was a small door, which they tried in vain to open.

“I believe she's in there,” said Dr. Owl, with conviction, “and that the gold piece dropped out of one of the bags which the Kangaroo was taking back to the House of Parliament.”

“How are we going to get the door open?” asked Roderick.

“We must burst it open if we can't manage it any other way,” declared Dr. Owl.

Roderick hunted about, and presently returned with a large hammer. With this they



"ON A PILE OF STRAW WAS THE POOR GOOSE, LOOKING THE PICTURE OF MISERY."

were banging at the door, and had nearly succeeded in bursting it open, when the Owl suddenly paused. "Hush!" said he. "What's that?"

Roderick listened intently, and presently could distinctly hear somebody trying to get in by the front door. He crept up and peeped through the keyhole. "It's the Snake," he whispered, hurrying back to the Owl.

"Quickly, then," cried Dr. Owl. "I've got the door open and I can hear that the Goose is somewhere in here, but it's all dark. We must get at her somehow before the Snake gets into the house."

Roderick found some matches and a candle, and they soon saw that inside the door was a steep flight of steps leading down to a kind of vault or cellar below. They crept down, and there, chained to a stone pillar and sitting disconsolately on a pile of straw, was the poor Goose, looking the picture of misery.

"Oh," she cried, when she saw who they were, "you've come to rescue me. I am glad. I've been terribly ill-treated here; chained in the dark to this pillar, and with very little food. I have been forced to lay golden eggs all day, and beaten by the Fox if I did not lay the usual quantity. And, oh"—and here the poor Goose shuddered

pitifully—"lately he has been threatening to—eat me."

The Owl gave a start. "It is a thing unheard of in the Dwindleberry Zoo," said he, "that one creature should eat another. It must be a suggestion of the Snake's; but there is no time to think of that now if we are to get you away from here in time. Have you brought the hammer?" he asked of Roderick.

The boy had fortunately done so, and they had just succeeded in breaking the links of the chain which bound the Goose to the pillar, when they heard a crash of broken glass from the floor above them.

"The Snake has broken a window and has got in," said the Owl, after a moment's thought. "Have you some snuff?"

"What?" cried Roderick, amazed at this unexpected question.

"Some snuff, quickly—yes or no, there isn't a moment to lose!"

"Y—yes," stammered Roderick, feeling in his waistcoat pocket. "I got some from the Turkey."

"Give it to me," cried Dr. Owl. "Now," he continued, hurriedly handing the packet to the Goose, "we're going to put our candle out, and hide at the farther end of the cellar; when the Snake comes down, you must find an opportunity of throwing the snuff into his face—leave the rest to me. Do exactly as I say; look out, he's coming," and Dr. Owl blew the light out and dragged Roderick away into a far corner of the cellar.

There was a moment's pause, and then a glimmer of light at the top of the stairs, and the Snake could be seen gliding down, hissing angrily and bringing a candle with him. He gave a sigh of relief when he saw the Goose. "I was afraid you had been stolen," he said; "who have you had down here?"

"What do you mean?" asked the Goose, simply.

"You must know what I mean," cried the Snake, angrily, going up to the Goose and glaring at her with his piercing eyes.

"Oh, someone came down and gave me this, if *that's* what you mean," answered the Goose, suddenly throwing the snuff into the Snake's eyes.

There was an angry cry, and the Snake fell writhing upon the ground, dropping the candle and lashing about furiously with his tail. Dr. Owl and Roderick sprang forward

and, without saying a word, motioned the Goose to hurry up the steps, and picking up the candle they followed her, leaving the Snake in total darkness. It was not many seconds later when they were out of the house and hurrying away as fast as their legs would carry them.

"He didn't see us at all," said Dr. Owl, and will never know who it was that rescued the Goose. Now the next thing is to get her safely away and find a home for her."

"I know a Pig," began the Goose, "who——"

"The very thing," said Dr. Owl; "he's an amiable old chap, and you'll be quite safe with him. We'll go there at once and see if he can take you in."

They found, rather to their surprise, for most of the animals were at the House of Parliament, that the Pig was at home. "Too much fag," he grunted, "to go all that way to hear a few speeches."

"But," said Dr. Owl, "see what you've lost. The Snake, through Lawyer Fox, has given everyone present a hundred pounds for himself."

The Pig rubbed himself reflectively against the railings surrounding his garden. "I don't mind," said he; "I don't care for money. If I can only be sure of a trough-full of food and a roof over my head, I'm quite happy."

The Owl drew a little closer. "If you can find room in your house for the Goose," he whispered, "and will not tell *anyone* for the present that she is here, I'll promise you a trough-full of food every day; the only thing I ask is that you bring me all the eggs she lays, as soon as you find them."

The Pig readily agreed to this, and very soon the Goose had taken off her bonnet and shawl and made herself quite at home in the cosy quarters provided for her. She was very grateful to Dr. Owl and Roderick for all they had done, and willingly promised the Doctor that he should have all the eggs she laid in future.

"Mind, not a word to *anybody* that she is here," warned Dr. Owl as they passed out of the gate, escorted by the puffing and grunting Pig, who was getting very fat and lazy.

"Not a word," promised the Pig, and Roderick and Dr. Owl went on their way, feeling that they had been very successful.

"What shall we do now?" said

Roderick, when they had gone a little way through the wood, at the edge of which the Pig's house stood.

"Go back to the House of Parliament," said Dr. Owl, promptly, "and see what's going on. Perhaps we shall be in time to get *our* hundred pounds each," he laughed. "Not that I mind much, now that I've got the Goose under my care; she—er—ahem!—will be a very profitable patient, I've no doubt," and the Doctor rubbed his hands with glee.

They soon reached the House, and could tell by the noise going on inside that the meeting was still proceeding, so the Doctor and Roderick quickly slipped into their respective places without attracting any attention. A Brown Bear was addressing the audience, and had apparently been tendering the thanks of all the animals for the handsome gifts which the Snake had provided, and which by this time had evidently all been distributed.

"And now," said the Fox, springing briskly from his seat directly the Brown Bear ceased speaking, "what are we to say in answer to the great question of the day? I see that our noble and munificent friend the Snake has, with great delicacy of feeling, left the building, so that we may discuss the matter impartially. Are we, or are we not, to admit this generous, high-minded, and noble-hearted creature into our midst?"



"TOO MUCH FAG," GRUNTED THE PIG, "TO GO ALL THAT WAY."

A yell of approval and cries of "Yes, yes, yes!" rose on all sides.

"Contrary?" inquired Lawyer Fox. A few Anti-Snakeites, headed by the Turkey, held up their hands.

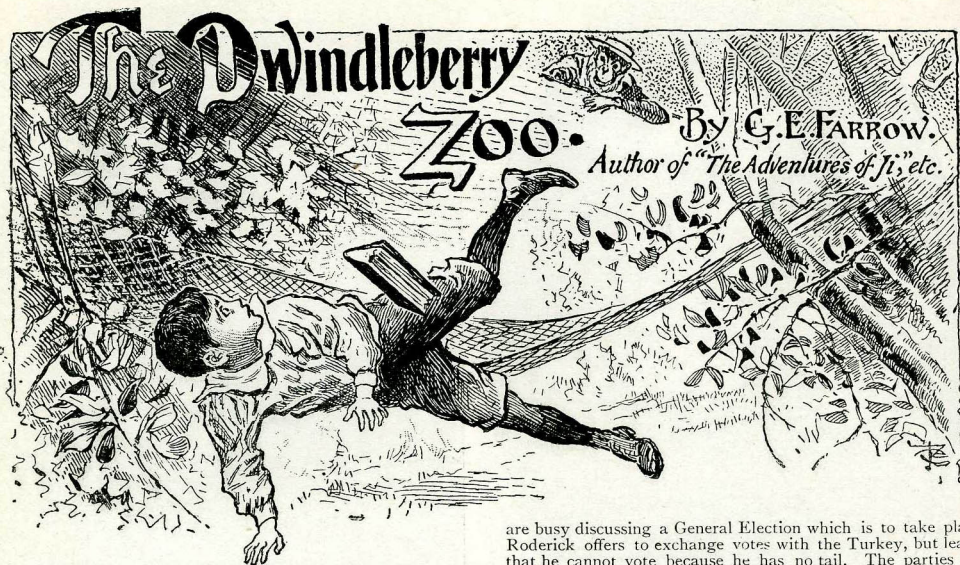
"We have none of us accepted his gift," gobbled the Turkey, "and we refuse to accept bribes."

"Bah!" cried the Fox, gazing contemptu-

ously at the handful of Anti-Snakeites; "you're hopelessly in the minority, so whatever you say doesn't matter in the least."

At this instant the Snake, with his eyes very red and swollen, glided into the House and went straight up to where the Fox was standing. He whispered something to his friend, which apparently gave him quite a shock.

(To be continued.)



SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

COMMENCED IN THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER.

RODERICK was lying in a hammock in a garden near the Zoo, reading a book on Natural History. A Monkey looks over the wall and invites him to visit the Dwindleberry Zoo. The Monkey gives him a dwindleberry, which makes him so tiny that he can creep through a very small hole behind the ivy. A Beetle is the door-keeper, and his main task seems to be to keep out a Snake, for all the creatures in the Dwindleberry Zoo are under a vow not to harm one another, and the Snake cannot be trusted. After many adventures Roderick goes to a Butterflies' garden party. There comes a rumour that a Snake has got through the Hole in the Wall, and, moreover, Roderick suddenly begins to grow again. The party breaks up in confusion. Roderick goes on the Seaside and Switchback Railway with the Guinea-Pig and Jerboa. A rumour is abroad that a Boy brought the Snake in, and he finds the creatures very hostile. He is saved by a Fishing-Frog. He grows again, and goes for a bathe. Two Rabbits steal his clothes. He pursues them, jumps down their hole, and finds himself falling into space. He eventually obtains his clothes, and finds the Rabbit family very friendly. He is introduced to the Squirrel and Dr. Owl. He stays the night with the Rabbits, and at dawn finds that he has grown too big for the room. His leg and foot shoot out of the window, and the whole affair creates great commotion. The Hare suggests to the family many futile expedients for getting Roderick out, but Father Rabbit sends for Lawyer Fox and Builder Badger. The latter extricates Roderick and the former makes out a long bill of costs. Roderick has no money, and is forced to accompany the Fox, and they meet a Goose going to the fair to sell her eggs. The Fox asks her if she has any *heavy* ones, but she will not tell him. The Fox gives Roderick the task, in order to pay his debts, of following her to the fair and procuring three heavy eggs from her. Roderick hurries away and enters the fair, but the Goose is nowhere to be seen. He goes into one of the booths, and there, amongst a heap of Oriental cushions, he finds—the Snake! The Snake tries to persuade Roderick to make the acquaintance of the Goose, so as to gain control of the vast wealth which she possesses. Roderick refuses and hastens out of the tent. He meets the Monkey and tells of his adventures with the Snake. The Monkey gives Roderick a dwindleberry and tells him to return to the tent and try and persuade the Snake to swallow it. By this means the creature will grow smaller, and one of the birds could then pick him up and drop him over the wall. When Roderick reaches the tent the Snake has gone! Roderick returns to tell the Monkey and encounters Mother Goose. She asks him to direct her to Dr. Owl's home. On the way she gives Roderick a heavy egg from her basket and tells him to break it. Out roll several sovereigns, which the Goose gives to Roderick as a present. After seeing Dr. Owl they pay a visit to Mr. Fox, and there again meet the Snake. Roderick is turned out of the house, and brings the Monkey on the scene by blowing a whistle. Roderick tells the Monkey the whole of the circumstances, and of his fears for the safety of the Goose. They cannot gain admission to the house, as the door is securely fastened. The Monkey proposes a visit to the Turkey, and on their way they meet several animals who

are busy discussing a General Election which is to take place. Roderick offers to exchange votes with the Turkey, but learns that he cannot vote because he has no tail. The parties are termed Snakeites and Anti-Snakeites, the former in favour of Snakes being admitted into the Zoo, the latter opposed to that idea. Roderick, although an Anti-Snakeite, induces several Snakeites to vote for him, thinking their votes will thus be wasted, but to his amazement the Secretary-Bird announces that *he is at the head of the Poll on the Snakeite side!* The Monkey is annoyed at the result of the poll, but advises Roderick to enter Parliament in order to ascertain their plans, and, if possible, frustrate them. At the conclusion of King Leo's Speech from the Throne, A. Turkey, Esq., A.S., addresses the House and makes reference to the Anti-Snakeites' objection to the admission of Roderick and the Snake. He is followed by Lawyer Fox, who announces that the Snake is prepared to give each member one hundred sovereigns. As there is not enough money to go round, the Kangaroo is sent to the Fox's house in order to obtain more. Roderick and the Owl follow to discover the Goose, and find her chained to a pillar. After Roderick releases her a crash of glass is heard, and they find the Snake has broken in. Dr. Owl hands the Goose some snuff, and tells her to throw it in the Snake's eyes. This gives them an opportunity of escaping, and they return to the House just as the Snake, with swollen eyes, glides in and whispers something to the Fox, which apparently gives him an awful shock.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LION'S TAIL.

“GOOSE gone?” Roderick heard him ask, incredulously. “Impossible!” The Snake pointed to his eyes and appeared to be telling him the whole story.

“In that case we sha’n’t get any more money,” cried the Fox, “and you’ve given it all away. *Something* must be done *at once*.”

“My dear friends,” he said, aloud, once more addressing the meeting, “there is a little legal formality in connection with the gift of one hundred pounds which I forgot to mention, but which is *most* important. It will be necessary in each case to make out a legal deed of gift, which *must* be prepared by a lawyer, and for which the fee in each case will be five pounds. As I am the only lawyer in the kingdom, you must each come to me to-morrow, or the next day, to have the

deeds drawn, and be sure to bring the five pounds with you. If you neglect to come by that time, the whole hundred pounds will have to be returned."

Some of the animals looked rather glum at this, but everyone agreed, and Lawyer Fox stepped down from the dais looking very happy and evidently congratulating himself on a clever stroke of business. Shortly after this the Secretary-Bird announced that the meeting was over, and the old Hippopotamus soon had everybody out of the hall.

They stood about outside, however, in little groups, each carrying his or her bag of gold and eagerly discussing amongst themselves the strange and unusual events which had sprung out of the first Snakeite Parliament. Roderick found himself the centre of a little group, consisting of the Monkey, Dr. Owl, the Turkey, and the Toucan. "Where were you gone to, such a long time, while the meeting was on?" inquired the Monkey.

Roderick and Dr. Owl explained to them in detail all that had occurred, and the Monkey seemed very pleased, while even the Turkey unbent a little, and did not seem quite so angry as he had been. As for the Toucan, he drew Roderick aside and, with a great clattering of his enormous beak, informed him that he had ceased to disapprove of him.

Roderick was just telling him that he was much obliged, when the Secretary-Bird came bustling up and fastened at once upon Roderick. "I've been looking everywhere for you," he said; "the King especially wishes to see you, he commanded me to tell you so when he was quitting the House after having delivered the speech from the throne."

"When shall I go?" asked Roderick, greatly surprised.

"You'd better go at once," replied the Secretary-Bird, "if not sooner. I suppose," he added, seeing Roderick looking about in an uncertain manner, "you don't know the way to the Royal Palace? I had better go with you, as it's so important. Come along!" And the bird hurried off with such long strides that the boy had almost to run to keep up with him.

"What is it that the King wishes to see me about? Do you know?" asked he, when they had passed out of hearing of the others.

"Oh, many things, I believe," replied the Secretary-Bird; "but principally about your tail, or, rather, your lack of one. I suppose it is true that you haven't a tail at all?"

Roderick laughed. "Why, yes, of course it is. Boys don't want tails. Of what use would one be to me?"

"It would, at any rate, add to your appearance," said the Secretary-Bird, flirting *his* tail about importantly. "You look very awkward without one; but don't let's argue about it, here is the Palace. Go straight in, and give your name to the Lord Chamberlain—the Crocodile, you know—and he will announce you."

Roderick walked slowly up the steps of a building which reminded him very much of Buckingham Palace, the outside of which he had been taken to see a few weeks before, and soon found himself in the presence of a gaudily-dressed official whom he rightly took to be the Lord Chamberlain. "The King wants to see me, if you please," said the boy; "and so I've come."



"HOW VERY INTERESTING. AND WHAT MAY YOUR NAME BE, PRAY?"

"Really?" yawned the creature. "How very interesting. And what may *your* name be, pray?"

"Roderick," was the reply.

The Crocodile gave him a quick glance. "A Roderick?" he said. "What's that?"

"Roderick is my name," explained the boy.

"Well, Crocodile is *my* name," said the Lord Chamberlain, "because I *am* one. What's the use of having a name which doesn't explain what you are?"

"I'm a boy, really," declared Roderick, patiently.

"Oh, *are* you?" remarked the Crocodile, sarcastically. "There's nothing to boast of in that, that I can see. I heard you explained about, when you first came, by Dr. Owl. The King sent for him, and asked him to say exactly what you were, and if there was any great danger in your having got into the Dwindleberry Zoo. 'No,' said Dr. Owl, 'he's merely a featherless, tailless biped, with defective sight, can only see in the light, and we can afford to treat his presence here with contempt'; that's what *he* said about you."

"Well, he doesn't think that now," said Roderick, "for we are very great friends, he and I, and have just been rescued——" He paused, remembering just in time that Dr. Owl had warned him not to tell anyone about their part in rescuing the Goose; so he left the sentence unfinished.

"Rescuing who?" asked the Crocodile, curiously.

"Oh, nothing — it doesn't matter," said Roderick, confusedly. "Will you take me to the King, please? I think, as he sent for me, I ought to go at once."

"Well, to tell you the truth," said the Lord Chamberlain, "since you have told me that you are a boy, I think you had, for I had instructions to take you into the Presence Chamber directly you arrived. Just step in here and I will announce you." He flung open some large doors and Roderick found himself in a handsome apartment in which several animals and birds were carrying on an animated conversation in whispers. The Mole was there talking to the Badger and one or two other Labour Members, and some solemn-looking Birds, all of whom Roderick recognized as Anti-Snakeites, were putting their heads together in one corner.

"I suppose this is the ante-room to the Audience Chamber,"

thought Roderick; and at the same instant he heard the Badger say, in a coarse, harsh voice, "I mean to offer him seven pounds to make me a peer. I'm very anxious to get into society, and a title is such a useful thing to have."

"But if you have a title how can you be a Labour Member?" objected the Mole.

"Oh, I shall give up being a Labour Member when I become one of the aristocracy, of course," said the Badger; "they all do——"

Here the Lord Chamberlain re-entered and beckoned Roderick to a door which he held open. "Roderick, the boy," he announced, in a loud voice, and pushing Roderick inside he closed the door.

The boy found himself in a handsome chamber, at one end of which was a throne and canopy. King Leo sat on the throne, with his head resting dejectedly on one side. He looked up as Roderick entered, but did not for the moment speak to him. Roderick wondered what he ought to do, and as a beginning made his best bow, and said, "Good afternoon, your Majesty."



"DOES IT MEAN THAT THIS LITTLE PIECE OF GOLD IS AS IMPORTANT AS I AM?"

King Leo gave a sigh, and then said, in a gruff voice, "Boy, I sent for you in order to ask you many questions about yourself, and how it is that you are here in our kingdom without our Royal permission. These matters, however, must stand over, for strange things have taken place here to-day, and I am in sore trouble about many things. Perhaps you can help me, and, if so, I may be able to do much for you in return." He paused, and then took up from a little table beside the throne a golden coin. "Do you know what this is?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, your Majesty," replied Roderick; "it is a sovereign."

"But," said the King, in a puzzled voice, "that is what I have always been called. Does it mean that this little piece of gold is as important as I am?"

"Oh, your Majesty," began Roderick, "it is so different, it doesn't mean the same thing at all. This sovereign is——"

"Ah, but I've found out already that it is very powerful. I find that a great many of my subjects have got some of these gold coins, and they seem to be able to do almost whatever they like with them. Why, would you believe it, one of them has actually been here and offered me a sovereign to let him sit on the throne for an hour and wear my crown? Of course, I refused, and then he told me plainly that it was only a matter of time, that the man who had the most money was sure to get anything he wanted."

"Well, but haven't *you* got any money, your Majesty?" inquired Roderick.

"No," said the King. "I've never seen any before to-day. We've never used it here before. I hear that after I had left the House of Parliament the Snake and the Fox distributed a quantity of it amongst my subjects, with the object—so I have been told privately—of making them equal with me, and so destroying my authority."

Roderick thought for a moment or two deeply. "Why doesn't your Majesty's Chancellor of the Exchequer get you some money?" he asked at length.

"What is a Chancellor of the Exchequer?" demanded King Leo. "I've never heard of one before."

"Our King gets all his money from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I believe," explained Roderick. "You see, he taxes the people. Each one has to pay something, and that goes to the King, and so he gets his money."

King Leo sat up suddenly, and appeared to be greatly interested. "That's evidently

a very good idea," said he. "If everyone has to give me some, I shall have quite a lot more than anyone else in fact, and so I shall continue to be the most powerful person in the kingdom. I see exactly. A Chancellor of the Exchequer is what I want. Now—now, who shall I appoint? Er—of course! I have it! You, you shall be Chancellor of the Exchequer; I shall appoint you immediately. Oblige me by touching the bell. I will call the Lord Chamberlain at once, and tell him."

"But, but——" began Roderick, greatly confused at the suggested honour which the King proposed conferring on him. "I—I'm afraid, your Majesty, I don't know anything about the duties of a——"

"You know more about them than anyone else here, at any rate," interrupted the King, "and I shall insist upon your accepting the post. Crocodile," his Majesty continued, as the Lord Chamberlain entered, "I have been graciously pleased to appoint Roderick, the boy, to be my Chancellor of the Exchequer. See to it that he has suitable apartments within the Palace, and that he is treated with the respect due to his high position. By the way," he asked, turning to Roderick, "what does the Chancellor of the Exchequer do if the people refuse to pay the taxes?"

"Sends them to prison, I believe," said Roderick.

"A very proper thing, too," said the King, approvingly. "You have my full authority to send anybody to prison who does not pay up at once. You had better begin your duties immediately, and come and see me as soon as you get some money. The more you bring the better I shall like it. You are dismissed." And, following the example of the Crocodile, Roderick bowed himself out backwards from the Royal presence.

He felt quite confused when he got out into the antechamber. It was all very well to be made Chancellor of the Exchequer, but how was he to get the animals and birds to pay, and how much was he to ask them each for?

The Crocodile was fussing about, and evidently telling the others of the honour which had been conferred upon Roderick by the King, and they all seemed greatly impressed.

"What exactly is a Chancellor of the Exchequer?" the boy heard one of them ask.

"I don't know precisely," admitted the Crocodile; "but it's something *very* important. He has the power to send you to prison if you don't do as he wishes."

The animals and other creatures all looked at Roderick with greater curiosity than ever after this, and so he felt that it would be a very suitable time for him to begin his duties. He therefore went up boldly to an old Pelican, who was staring in stupid curiosity, and said, pleasantly, "I have been appointed by the King to collect taxes from all of his

Why should we have kings at all? The working classes are the true kings—you couldn't do without them—and I belong to the working classes. You won't have a sovereign from me."

"Then," said Roderick, rather nervously, "I'm afraid I shall have to take you to prison."

"Oh, oh! *will* you?" said the Badger, drawing back his lips and showing his teeth. "Very well, then; take me. Come along!"

He looked so very angry and ferocious that Roderick thought it better not to pursue the subject, but turned to the others. One after another, however, they turned tail and ran when he approached them, and very soon he found himself alone in the antechamber. "This will never do," he thought; "the King will be very angry if I don't do better than this." And he found his way out of the Palace and into the wood. He had not gone very far before he met the Turkey strutting about with his usual grand air, and carrying his cane and snuff-box with his accustomed elegance.

Roderick stopped and bowed, the Turkey returning his salute with an elaborate flourish of his cane. "The news," he said. "Is there any news?"

"The King," replied Roderick, "has made me Chancellor of the Exchequer."

"My dear sir," gobbled the Turkey, effusively, "I congratulate you heartily. What an honour! What a privilege! What a high position! What a—— What exactly is a Chancellor of the Exchequer?"

"Oh, I have to collect taxes for the King, you know, so that he can have more money than anybody else. Er—would you mind giving me yours now, please? It's a sovereign."

The Turkey drew himself up and looked very solemn. "My dear sir," said he, "I utterly disapprove of money on principle. I refused, as you know, to accept any when it was distributed by the Snake, and in consequence I have none to give you. I wish you every success in your new appointment, and I wish you good day!" And nodding stiffly the Turkey strutted away, leaving poor Roderick alone once more.

He wandered on rather aimlessly for a time, meeting no one and seeing no one but a long-tailed Parakeet, who flew up on to a high branch of a tree over his head. Roderick shouted up at him,



"CERTAINLY NOT. WHAT NEXT, I WONDER?"

Majesty's subjects, and so will you please give me a sovereign?"

The Pelican gasped. "Give you a sovereign! What for?" he cried.

"For the King," said Roderick.

"No," said the Pelican, snapping his beak together decidedly and waddling off hurriedly; "certainly not. What next, I wonder?"

This did not seem very promising, and Roderick went up to the Badger rather nervously. "I am authorized by the King to collect a sovereign from each of his subjects," he began. "Will you please give me yours now?"

"Give you a sovereign for the King?" cried the Badger, indignantly. "What for? What's he going to give me for it? What has he done to deserve it? Give you a sovereign for the King? Pooh! Who's the King, I'd like to know? We don't want no kings

asking him for the King's taxes, and trying to explain the matter to him, but the bird replied in such a succession of shrill shrieks—of which he could make nothing at all—that the boy was obliged to hurry away with his fingers in his ears. Presently, however, he came to the Alligator's house, and found that personage sitting, as before, at the door of his hut, this time with a table in front of him, on which he had spread out all his money and was counting the golden sovereigns which the Snake had given him into little heaps of five pieces.

"Ah, my dear sir," he said, when he saw Roderick, "I am very, very delighted to see you, and I expect you are equally pleased to see me, are you not? I voted for you, as I said I should, and I was very pleased to see you got in at the top of the poll. What a delightful meeting we had, and what a charming person the Snake is. How generous! And what have you been doing with yourself since the meeting, pray?"

"I've been to see the King," said Roderick.

"Indeed! What an honour! Charming person the King. Nicest King I've ever known. Did he mention my name?"

"I—I'm afraid not," replied Roderick. "You—you see, he only wanted to see me about business," he explained.

"Oh, business, eh? And what was the business, if I may be so bold as to inquire?"

"His Majesty has appointed me his Chancellor of the Exchequer," said Roderick, doubtfully.

"Dear, dear me! Sounds very important. What are your duties?"

"I have to collect money for his Majesty."

"How much?" asked the Alligator, fingering some of the gold thoughtfully.

"A sovereign, please," replied Roderick, feeling hopefully that he was on the right track at last.

"A sovereign? For a sovereign," repeated the Alligator, after thinking deeply. "It sounds a fair sort of exchange. I'll have him."

"Have who? What do you mean?" asked Roderick, in surprise.

"The King. You said you'd take a sovereign for him, you know," replied the



"COUNTING OUT THE GOLDEN SOVEREIGNS WHICH THE SNAKE HAD GIVEN HIM."

Alligator. "Here's the money. When will you deliver him? I've always wanted to have a King on the premises; it gives the place such an air of respectability."

"What are you talking about?" asked Roderick, in utter bewilderment.

"You said you wanted a sovereign for the King, and I said I'd take him for the money," replied the Alligator, equally bewildered.

Roderick burst out laughing. "You misunderstand me," he said. "I wanted the money to give to the King, not *for* him in the way you meant."

"Why didn't you say so, then?" said the Alligator, bursting into tears, which he was prone to do on the slightest occasion. "You've disappointed me bitterly. I'd quite set my heart on having a real King about the house."

"What's the disturbance about?" cried a cheery voice, as the Monkey, the Secretary-Bird, and the Toucan made their appearance at this moment.

Roderick and the Alligator between them managed to explain the situation, and the Secretary-Bird summed up the whole matter. "You are going the wrong way to work

entirely," he explained to Roderick. "You must first have your official position publicly announced, and then, when notices have been posted up about it and everyone knows what they are expected to do, you must go round and collect the taxes, with one or two strong

animals to support you. I would recommend the Bear, the Wolf, and the Tiger. With these to help you, I don't think you need fear much further trouble in collecting the money. Come with me and we will go and see them about it at once."

(To be continued.)



SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

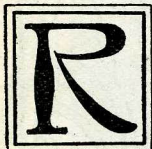
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fastened. The Monkey proposes a visit to the Turkey, and on their way they meet several animals who are busy discussing a General Election which is to take place. Roderick offers to exchange votes with the Turkey, but learns that he cannot vote because he has no tail. The parties are termed Snakeites and Anti-Snakeites. Roderick, although an Anti-Snakeite, induces several Snakeites to vote for him, thinking their votes will thus be wasted, but to his amazement the Secretary-Bird announces that *he is at the head of the Poll on the Snakeite side!* At the conclusion of King Leo's Speech from the Throne, A. Turkey, Esq., A.S., addresses the House and makes reference to the Anti-Snakeites' objection to the admission of Roderick and the Snake. Lawyer Fox announces that the Snake is prepared to give each member one hundred sovereigns. As there is not enough money to go round, the Kangaroo is sent to the Fox's house in order to obtain more. Roderick and the Owl follow to discover the Goose, and find her chained to a pillar. After Roderick releases her a crash of glass is heard, and they find the Snake has broken in. Dr. Owl hands the Goose some snuff, and tells her to throw it in the Snake's eyes. This gives them an opportunity of escaping, and they return to the House just as the Snake, with swollen eyes, glides in and whispers something to the Fox, which apparently gives him an awful shock. Roderick is told that King Leo wishes to see him at once. He hastens to the Palace and the King informs him that he has appointed him to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is to collect money from the animals and birds. He finds this task a very difficult one. The animals are not willing to give their money to the King. The Secretary-Bird suggests that Roderick should obtain the support of the Bear, the Wolf, and the Tiger in collecting the money.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CAMEL'S TAIL.



RODERICK and the Monkey set out to try and find the Bear and the Tiger, to help Roderick in his duties as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretary-Bird went off to draw up the Royal

Proclamation appointing him to the post, and arranged with several of the smaller creatures and birds, who were standing about listening with open mouths to what was going on, to deliver notices to all the animals in the kingdom to the effect that they would be expected to pay one golden sovereign as tax to the King.

The boy and his guide had not gone very far into the wood before they heard two birds quarrelling violently. "All the berries on this bush belong to me," screamed one; "and you sha'n't have one of them without paying for it."

"But you never used to charge me before," protested the other.

"That's because you hadn't any money," returned the first. "It was of no use charging you anything if you couldn't pay. Now that you can afford it, it's another thing entirely. A sovereign a meal—that's my charge for these berries. You can take them or leave them, just as you like."

"Dear, dear, what a fuss all this money business does seem to be causing," remarked

Roderick, as they passed out of hearing. "It seemed ever so much nicer here before it was introduced."

"Yes," agreed the Monkey, gloomily; "everything seems to have gone wrong since that wretched old Snake came here. Why, what's that?" he interrupted.

At the foot of a big tree a kind of booth was erected, and a Squirrel was running up and down the tree bringing a great store of all kinds of nuts and piling them on the stall in big heaps.

"Why, Squirrel," cried the Monkey, "what are you up to?"

The Squirrel paused and wiped his brow with his handkerchief before replying. "Opening a shop," he said at last, rather breathlessly. "One is obliged to do *something* for a living these hard times, with rents so high and all that sort of thing."

"Rents high? Whatever do you mean?" asked the Monkey.

"Oh! and what do I mean?" said the Squirrel, sarcastically. "It's rent that we have to pay *now*, if you please. The old Badger who lives under this tree told me this morning that he considered it was *his* tree, as he had lived here longest, and that if I wished to continue to live here I must pay ten sovereigns a year for rent, and if I didn't pay it at once he should serve me with a notice to quit and put the matter into the hands of Lawyer Fox immediately. What do you think of *that*?" And the poor Squirrel's teeth chattered with rage. "So now I'm obliged to open shop with my store of nuts which I had laid up for the winter, in order to earn the money to pay the rent with. However, I've told my daughter, who is housemaid to Dr. Owl, that she must ask him for five sovereigns a year for wages, so that will help a little. Can I sell you a few nuts this afternoon?" he added, in a business-like way.

"I *should* like some," said the Monkey, eyeing them longingly. "How do you sell them?"

"Well," said the Squirrel, scratching his head reflectively, "it's very difficult to know

what to charge for them. You see, there's nothing less than a sovereign here, and a sovereign seems a lot for a few nuts. I think I'd better give you a ticket for a sovereign, which will entitle you to have as many as you want for, say, a month."

"That seems fair," agreed the Monkey, sitting down on the stump of a tree and at once setting to work cracking some of the nuts. "Have some?" he cried, generously, handing a big handful to Roderick.

The Squirrel looked a little ill at ease. "Er—ahem!" he gently reminded the Monkey, "I—er—didn't mean, of course, that—er—you could invite all your friends to have nuts for the same price."

"No, no, of course not," cried Roderick, hastily putting them down again, although he was longing to have some.

"Keep them—keep them. I'll have less next time; that will be all right, won't it, Squirrel?"

"Y—yes, I suppose so," said the Squirrel, doubtfully; "but



I—ER—DIDN'T MEAN, OF COURSE, THAT—ER—YOU COULD INVITE ALL YOUR FRIENDS.

it mustn't occur too often or I shall lose all my profit."

Roderick couldn't help thinking how very business-like all the animals were becoming, and was just preparing to crack some of the nuts when the Monkey gave a sudden exclamation. "Good gracious! Why there is the Bear and a whole swarm of Bees with Lawyer Fox, and a whole crowd of animals following them! What can be the matter?"

"It's a most beautifully-complicated case," the Fox was saying, as he hurried past with the Bear, whose head was tied up in a cloth, on one side of him and the swarm of Bees on

to it, and they caught him there and swarmed around him and stung him; so they're both gone to law about it. It's most exciting. We never go to law here, as a rule, but everything seems to be altering somehow, lately. Come on, let's see what the end will be."

"I'm going with them," said the Monkey, hastily stuffing some nuts into his pockets. "You must go and try and get the Tiger to help you collect the taxes yourself. It's no use asking the Bear now; he'll be too busy about his own affairs, though he *would* have been a good one to have squeezed the taxes out of them, wouldn't he? However, it's no use thinking about that now; go and ask the Tiger. Don't be afraid of his smile; it looks like a snarl, but there's nothing in it, unless he wags his tail, and then it means that he's angry. Good-bye; I'm off. See you at the

Public Hall later," and without another word the Monkey hurried after the crowd who were following the Bear and the Bees.

Roderick felt rather depressed at having to interview the Tiger by himself, but he was sure that he would never be able to collect the taxes without some sort of assistance, and so he finished his nuts, raised his cap politely to the Squirrel, and set off in the direction which the Monkey had indicated before he left. Presently he came to a large building, outside which, on a tidily-kept lawn, sat an Elephant and a Camel taking tea and eating currant buns. The Elephant had an official-looking paper spread out before him which he was reading carefully through a pair of spectacles. The Camel was staring disconsolately at a similar piece of paper which he was holding up before his eyes.

"Halloa! who's this?" cried the Elephant, catching sight of Roderick, and putting his cup

down carefully to adjust his glasses in order to see him more distinctly.

"I'm—er—Roderick—the boy," he began, rather nervously. "I—I've been appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, you know, and—"

"Oh! *you're* him, are you?" shouted the Elephant, ungrammatically. "Disgraceful! I mean to put my foot down at once!" Roderick hopped hurriedly out of the way, because it looked as though the Elephant was going to put his words into effect



"HALLOA! WHO'S THIS?" CRIED THE ELEPHANT."

the other. "You can sue each individual Bee for assault, and each individual Bee can sue you for trespass; and you can get costs from them—if you can—and they can get costs from you—if they can—and I shall get costs from you both, in *any* case. Oh, it's a most beautiful case, a very beautiful case, indeed."

"What is the matter?" asked the Monkey of one of the crowd.

"The Bear climbed up a tree where the Bees had stored some honey, helped himself

"What do you mean by it?" shouted the Elephant, angrily.

"If—if you please, I couldn't help it," said Roderick, feebly. "I didn't wish to be made Chancellor of the Exchequer—in fact, I wish anybody else had been made it but me. I'm sure I shall never be able to collect any taxes, and——"

"I should think not, indeed," roared the Elephant; "they're illegal. We've had advice from Lawyer Fox—for a sovereign each—and he says we're not to pay them on any account."

"I can't understand them at all," said the Camel, in a melancholy voice, "*however* long I look at them," and this was really not surprising considering that he was holding the paper upside down.

"Are those the notice papers about the taxes, if you please?" asked Roderick. "I heard that the Secretary-Bird was going to send them out."

"Yes," replied the Elephant, "they've just come, left here by a Weasel or a Stoat or something like that. A pretty thing. *'You are hereby commanded to pay on demand to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the sum of One Sovereign sterling, for the King's Tax. Whereof fail not at your peril.'* Cheek! Impertinence! Who's going to collect it I'd like to know? It was fortunate Lawyer Fox came along just then and told us that we needn't pay it. It's illegal, that's what it is, and I shall put my foot down."

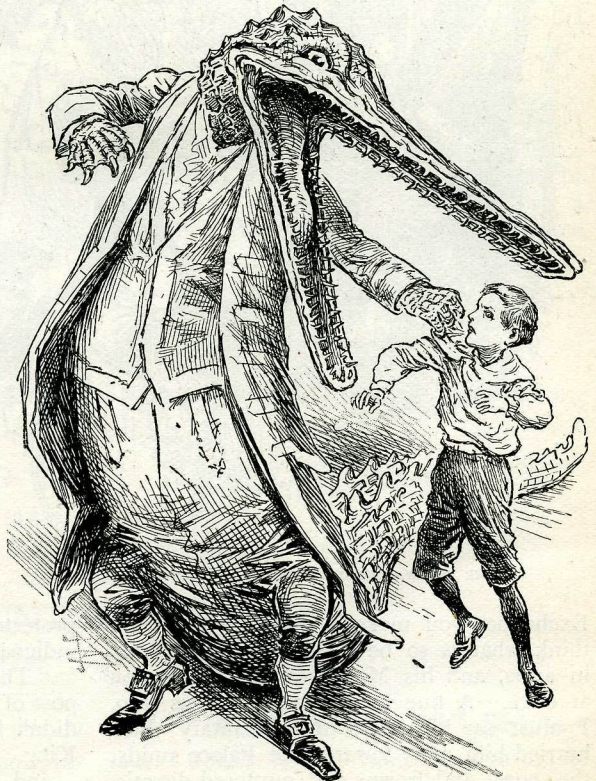
He looked so much like doing it then and there that Roderick, who felt very small beside these huge creatures, thought he had better withdraw while he was safe, so he silently stole away, while the melancholy Camel looked at him with reproachful eyes, murmuring in a choking voice, "I shall never be able to understand it, whichever way I look at it."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" cried Roderick, when he found himself alone, "how I do wish this wretched money hadn't come into the place, it does seem to make everybody so cross and disagreeable—and—oh! there's the Tiger." This as he saw a huge yellow head sticking out from some tall grass a little way in front of him. He was glad that the Monkey had warned him not to be afraid of the Tiger's smile,

for his lips were drawn up into a kind of snarl which showed his terrible fangs, and he was making a noise like the sawing of wood.

"I suppose he's purring," thought Roderick; "if so, he's pleased about something. I'm glad of that." He went a little further forward and was just about to speak when he noticed a curious swish, swishing noise, and over the tops of the grass he caught sight of something yellow moving. "Good heavens!" cried Roderick, "he's wagging his tail!" and without another thought he turned and ran as hard as he could anywhere, anywhere away from those glaring eyes and grinning teeth. He didn't dare to look around, and he didn't stop till he saw a big crowd of creatures away in the distance, and found that he had come back to the Public Hall again.

There was a large notice posted up on the wall, headed "Royal Proclamation," and an excited crowd were reading and criticizing it. It was evidently the notice of his appointment to the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his authority for collecting the money from all the subjects. "We won't put up with it!" "It's outrageous!" "Down



"'HERE YOU ARE AT LAST,' CRIED THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN."

with the Monarchy and tyrants!" "Long live the Republic!" "No taxes!" "Never give in!" "Freedom for the people!" "Down with the King?"

These were some of the cries which Roderick distinguished amongst the Babel of sounds from the enraged animals, birds, and insects gathered around the Proclamation.

The Secretary-Bird came up with a scared face. "Here's a pretty how-d'y-e-do," he exclaimed. "The whole kingdom is on the verge of a revolution, and all on account of these precious taxes you persuaded the King to enforce. A pretty Chancellor of the

"I can't think how you can say it is my fault," objected Roderick, thoroughly bewildered at the turn matters had taken. "I'm sure I didn't want to be Chancellor of the Exchequer."

"Don't argue," snapped the Secretary-Bird; "keep your excuses, you'll want them for the King when you get before him."

Roderick felt very miserable as he was hurried along, and more so when the Lord Chamberlain met them at the entrance of the Palace and immediately seized him by the collar and began pushing him roughly before him.

"Here you are at last," he cried, as he tightened his grasp on Roderick's collar. "The King has been inquiring for you this last half hour. He's very angry, and I've never heard him growl so loud before in all my life. He looks as though he could eat one," and the Lord Chamberlain gave a shudder. "I was to take you before him the minute you arrived, so come along."

Almost before he had time to collect his senses, Roderick found himself thrust into the Presence Chamber, and the Lord Chamberlain had bowed himself out.

"What money have you collected?" growled the King in a terrific voice.

"Well, you see, your Majesty," began Roderick, apologetically, "I—er——"

"How much have you collected?" again demanded the Lion with a low growl. "No prevarication. *How much?*"

"Nothing, I am afraid, as yet, your Majesty. You see, I——"

"*Nothing!*" roared the King. "Nothing at all? Do you mean to tell me that? Do you dare?"

"I couldn't collect it from animals bigger than myself,"

protested Roderick, beginning to feel very indignant.

"Then you shouldn't have undertaken the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer if you didn't know how to exchequer," growled the King. "You are degraded from your duties—and—stay—you must be punished as well. Summon the Lord Chamberlain."



"THE FOX WAS TRYING WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO BE A KING."

Exchequer you make, I must say. I can't think what is to be done. Everyone is up in arms, and his Majesty wants to see you at once. A fine pickle you've got us into, I must say!" And the Secretary-Bird hurried him away towards the Palace amidst the scowls and frowns and muttered dissatisfaction of the multitude,

Roderick miserably went to the bell and pulled it.

"Send for Lawyer Fox," said the King when that official made his appearance.

"He is already in waiting, your Majesty," said the Lord Chamberlain.

"Then admit him immediately."

An instant later Lawyer Fox made his appearance, sleek and smiling as usual, rubbing his paws and bowing gracefully as he came forward. "Your Majesty has some commands for me," he inquired, respectfully.

"What is it legal to do to a Chancellor of the Exchequer when he has neglected his duty?" demanded the King.

"Well," said the Fox, thoughtfully, while his wicked eyes sparkled revengefully, "you might have him executed, or—er—imprisoned in the Tower, or—er—"

"We'll have him imprisoned, he may be useful another time," interrupted the King. "Tell the Lord Chamberlain to see that he is locked up at once in the safest place in the Tower. You are dismissed."

"Your Majesty," began Lawyer Fox. But the King only growled and went out of the room, while the Lord Chamberlain caught hold of Roderick and marched him off. Lawyer Fox behaved very singularly after the King had gone, and on turning around as he was quitting the room Roderick saw him calmly seating himself on the Throne and posing there as though he was trying what it felt like to be a King.

The poor boy hadn't time to reflect much upon this, however, for he was hurried from the room and along passages and corridors innumerable, till at last he reached a great

gloomy hall of solid stone half buried in the earth, and dimly lighted from windows near the top of the wall. A few wooden tables and settles, a pitcher of water, and a wooden bowl, evidently for some sort of coarse food, which stood empty on a stool, completed the furniture of this dismal place.

Roderick was thrust in without a word, and the heavy door banged to with its own weight, and was locked and doubly locked by the Lord Chamberlain, and the poor boy was left alone. His head sank on his arms in despair as he threw himself on to one of the settles in front of a table, and in this attitude he sat till, tired out as he was with the day's exciting adventures, he fell asleep. How long he slept he did not know, but it was probably through the night, for it was daylight when he was awakened by a furious altercation outside the door, and after a noise of growling and snapping and snarling had gone on for some time the door was hurriedly thrust open and someone thrown heavily inside, the door being then drawn back and bolted. Roderick stared with amazement. The new-comer was the King!

The Lion gathered himself up with a lot of angry growling, and at last caught sight of Roderick.

"Your Majesty!" exclaimed the boy.

"There has been a revolution," explained the King, in a bitter tone of voice, "and I have been deposed, that's all. Lawyer Fox, who I thought was my friend, has brought it about. Turned the Monarchy into a Republic, and the Snake has been elected President!"

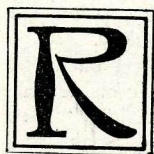
(To be continued.)

The Dwindleberry Zoo.

By G. E. FARROW.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PIG'S TAIL.



ODERICK was more than interested and greatly surprised at what the Lion told him. "Whatever excuse did they offer for deposing your Majesty?" he asked.

"Oh, they said," replied the Lion, bitterly, "that it was ridiculous for *me* to be King when I hadn't got any money at all, and that the proper person to be on the throne was the one who had most money. Of course, since the Snake had given everybody who was present at the opening of Parliament such a handsome gift, they at first decided to make him King. Then someone pointed out that if they had a Republic instead of a Monarchy the people themselves could make the taxes, and as no one would wish to pay them there wouldn't be any. This pleased the people tremendously, so they decided to have a Republic at once, and I was deposed, and the Snake elected President by a large majority."

Roderick thought for a few moments. "What do you suppose they will do to you?" he asked, presently. "What do they generally do to deposed Kings?"

"I don't know," said the Lion, miserably; "send them away into exile, or chop their heads off, I believe."

Roderick looked greatly concerned. "Oh, dear!" he cried, "I do hope they won't do that to you."

"So do I, I'm sure," remarked the Lion.

Just at this moment there was a curious buzzing sound heard at the window, which was high up in the wall and heavily barred. They both looked up and could see that it was the Bumble Bee.

"I've come to warn you both," he buzzed, "that things are looking very serious for both of you. Lawyer Fox is trying to persuade the animals that you ought both to be executed, the King for trying to extort taxes from his subjects and Roderick for collecting them."

"Oh, dear! What is to be done?" cried Roderick, naturally feeling greatly alarmed. "Do the animals seem to agree with the suggestion?"

"Most of them," said the Bumble Bee. "Of course you have some friends, and they are going to do what they can for you; in fact, the Monkey told me to tell you that

you were not to lose heart, and that he and the Toucan (who has quite become your friend) and one or two others were going to try to rescue you. Good-bye! Keep a stiff upper lip!"

The Lion seemed greatly depressed at the news which the Bumble Bee had brought, and Roderick had hard work to console him and prevent him from breaking down altogether.

"It's all that wretched old Snake," said he. "I was always warned that if once he got into the Zoo everything would go wrong."

"If only we could get him out of it again," said Roderick.

"Oh, that's impossible, I suppose," said the Lion, with a sigh.

"Well, we'll have a try for it, anyhow, when we get out of here," replied Roderick, hopefully.

"When we do. You seem to treat it as quite certain that we are going to do so," said the Lion.

"Well," replied Roderick, "didn't you hear what the Bumble Bee said, that our friends were going to help us to escape? And of course they will do so."

While he was thus trying to raise the Lion's spirits the key was turned in the lock, and the Lord Chamberlain entered, carrying a large pair of shears, and some clothes over his arm. He carefully locked the door behind him, and then went down on his knee before the Lion. "Your Majesty," he said, "I want to assure you that you have still some faithful and loyal subjects, who will give their lives, if necessary, in your Majesty's service and defence. The first thing is to get your Majesty away from here, and that cannot be done without considerable strategy. Will your Majesty be willing to follow the advice of your Majesty's friends, and do implicitly as they suggest?"

The King was greatly overcome by the loyalty and devotion of the Lord Chamberlain and his other friends, and promised to do exactly what was suggested.

"That is well, your Majesty," was the reply, and thereupon the shears were produced, and the Lord Chamberlain apologetically announced that, as the next step, he must cut off the King's mane.

"What?" exclaimed the Lion. "Cut off my mane? Whatever for?"

"It is absolutely necessary to disguise your Majesty," replied the Lord Chamberlain,

"and it will be impossible to do so while so distinctive a feature as your Majesty's handsome mane remains."

The King gave a sigh. "Well, if you *must* do so, you must, I suppose," said he. "I don't like losing it, though, I can assure you."

The Lord Chamberlain did not wait for further permission, but was soon cutting away great masses of the thick hair from the Lion's head and neck.

It was extraordinary what an alteration it made in his Majesty's appearance, and when the operation was concluded one could hardly recognise the Lion as the same animal. The Lord Chamberlain then produced a long dress and a lady's hat with a number of feathers and roses in it. These he persuaded the Lion to dress himself in, and then turned his attention to Roderick.

Producing a long piece of rope he cleverly fastened some hair from the Lion's mane on to it, and afterwards attached it to the back

of Roderick's jacket. "That will serve for a tail," he said. Then he smeared the boy's face and hands with some sticky substance and pressed some more hair upon it, so that poor Roderick—with a sailor's cap on his head—looked exactly like a Monkey.

The Lord Chamberlain stepped back and regarded his handiwork with considerable satisfaction. "You'll do," he said. "Now just remain quietly here till the Snake and the Fox come, and do not express the slightest surprise if you are mistaken for the Lioness and the Ourang-Outang."

He gathered up all the rest of the hair, placed it in a bag which he had brought with him for the purpose, and went out, carefully locking the door behind him.

"Well," exclaimed the Lion, when he had gone; "of all the remarkable things I have ever heard of—"

"I feel sure it's all right, though," interrupted Roderick; "he's going to try and let us out in these disguises, and I'm sure, your Majesty, no one would ever recognise you. You look exactly like a lady Lion."

"And I can hardly believe that you are not a Monkey of some sort," declared the King. "It was really rather clever of him."

Almost before he had finished the sentence footsteps were heard approaching the door of the cell. A moment or two later the door was thrown open, and the Snake and Lawyer Fox entered the cell, followed by the Lord Chamberlain.

"And who are these prisoners?" inquired the Snake, in a smooth voice.

"The Lioness; can't you see?" chimed in Lawyer Fox. "And an Ape of some sort."

"Ah! Is the Lioness any relation to the late deposed King?" inquired the Snake, sharply.

"Only some sort of distant connection, I believe, Mr. President," replied the Lord Chamberlain. "The Monkey, he was imprisoned for disobedience to the King."

"H'm! Well, we wish to gain the affection and approval of all the members of the new Republic on our appointment as President, so you are both set free," said the Snake, addressing Roderick and the Lion. "See that you do not again do anything to get yourselves



"THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN STEPPED BACK AND REGARDED HIS HANDIWORK WITH CONSIDERABLE SATISFACTION."

into disgrace. You may go," and the Snake and Lawyer Fox followed the Lord Chamberlain to another cell.

Roderick thought that this would be a good time for them to disappear, and as soon as the Snake's back was turned he motioned to the Lion, and they were soon flying down the corridor in an opposite direction, and presently passed out of the Palace into the wood.

"I know where we can go," said Roderick, when they stopped to take breath. "The Turkey will take us in, and we'll send for the Monkey and the Toucan, and hold a sort of meeting to know what will be the best to be done. I know where the Turkey lives," and he led the way to the spot where he had first met that polite and highly-polished bird.

The Turkey was sunning himself on the lawn in front of his house, and flourishing his cane with the same self-important air which Roderick remembered so well.

"Do I know you?" he said, strutting to the gate and adjusting his eyeglass. "Your faces do not seem to me quite familiar."

"I am Roderick, the boy," whispered Roderick, "and this is the King. We have been——"

"King? King? Er—*what* King?" gobbled the Turkey. "There is no King, unhappily, in these disturbing times, since the Snake——"

"But he *is* the King," persisted Roderick, and he hurriedly related to the Turkey the circumstances which brought them thither.

The Turkey's manner immediately changed, and he bowed low before the Lion, and ushered them both into his house with great ceremony. "I will send at once for our friends the Monkey, the Toucan, and Dr. Owl," he said, "and we will discuss the situation, and try and discover what is best to be done in the circumstances. In the meantime, I will have a little food prepared, for you must both be faint after your unfortunate experiences."

He gave instructions to his servants—two ancient Guinea Fowls, and a Hare, who wore a straight jacket and a vacant expression, and who was generally prone to becoming a little mad during the month of March, but who was otherwise quite a pleasant person—and soon the meal was on the table, and the Hare had set off to acquaint their friends of the King's and Roderick's escape from prison.

In less than half an hour the Monkey and the Toucan made their appearance, and expressed the greatest pleasure at seeing the

King and Roderick at liberty, although they were at first greatly astonished at their altered appearance, and could hardly recognise them.

"Now," said Roderick, when the Turkey had made them all comfortable, and the remains of the meal had been cleared away, "I have thought of a plan whereby I believe the King could be restored to power again, but I want your advice about it first. The Snake has been elected President because he is supposed to have more money than anybody else, but I know how the Lion could easily be made richer than he is. There's the Goose. Neither the Snake nor Lawyer Fox know where she is hidden, but *we* know, and what would be more simple than to get her to lay golden eggs for the King alone? In that way the Lion would soon become the richest person here."

The Monkey looked at the Toucan, and the Toucan nodded his heavy head gravely. "H'm! A very good idea, a capital idea!" he declared.

"Excellent," echoed the King. "I'm very pleased with you; if everything goes right, and I am restored to the throne, I will make you my——"

"No, *please* your Majesty," interrupted Roderick, remembering what a lot of trouble he had had while he had been Chancellor of the Exchequer, "do not make me anything connected with State affairs. I don't understand anything about them, and——"

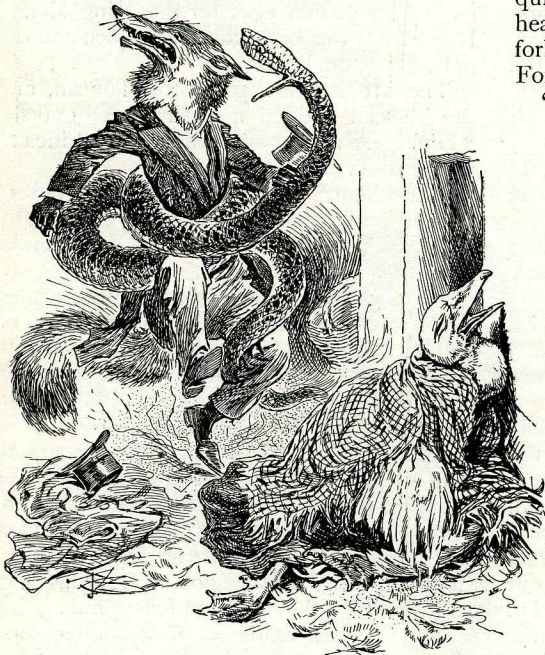
"There will be time enough to discuss all that when the King is restored," said the Monkey, practically. "At present what we have to do is to go to the Pig's and interview the Goose. We had better lose no time. Come at once," and he got up from his seat, and motioned the others to follow him.

The Turkey made a considerable fuss about changing some of his garments, but at last they were all ready, and hurrying as quickly as the Turkey's dignity would allow them to proceed in the direction of the Pig's residence.

To their great surprise, when they had got half-way there, and just past Dr. Owl's, whom they had sent for to join them, and to whom they were explaining the whole situation, who should they meet, hurrying towards them, but the Pig himself. "Oh," he panted, "I'm so glad to meet you. I was coming to tell you—such a misfortune—such a nice person, too—I've never had a lodger that gave so little trouble—and now she'll have to go. Such a pity, too, she seemed so comfortable and homely-like, but it wouldn't be safe for her to stop now, and——"

"What on earth are you talking about?" interrupted the Monkey.

"Why," explained the Pig, breathlessly, "the Wasp has discovered that the Goose is lodging with me, and has gone to tell the Snake and Lawyer Fox. She threatened to do this because I drove her away from my garden. She is always poking and prying about, and I was afraid she would discover the Goose, and so she did, as you hear. She says she has only to tell the Snake, and he will give her a great reward for the information. She's gone off now to tell him, so I thought that I ought to let you know at once, so that you could take her away before the Snake can get here."



"THE SNAKE REARED HIS HEAD DEFIANTLY, HISSING AND SHOOTING OUT HIS FORKED TONGUE."

"Quite right, quite right," said Dr. Owl, who had been looking very grave at this unexpected news. "We'll go at once and remove her to some safer place. Any eggs?"

"Six since you were there last, sir," replied the Pig.

"H'm! Well, don't let us waste any more time talking; we haven't a moment to spare."

The others followed, talking in whispers about the startling news, and soon the Pig's house came in sight.

"The gate is open," cried the Pig, in alarm. "I'm sure I closed it before I came

out. Somebody has been here since I have been away!"

They hurried through the house and out into the paddock at the back, where the Goose had been living in a separate cottage. At the door of her house the poor Goose was lying apparently dead, a number of feathers strewn on the ground showing there had been a great struggle, while near by the Snake had wound himself several times around Lawyer Fox, and was slowly crushing him within the heavy folds of his huge body. The Fox, gasping and groaning, was feebly struggling to free himself from his embrace. When the Snake saw the party approaching he did not relinquish his hold on the Fox, but reared his head defiantly, hissing and shooting out his forked tongue at them as they hurried to the Fox's help.

"What are you doing?" said the Monkey.

"Crushing him," replied the Snake.

"He has killed the Goose that laid the golden eggs, and he deserves to die."

"But it is a law here that no animal kills or injures another," protested the Lion.

"That," answered the Snake, with a sneer, "was in the late King's time; I shall alter all that now I am President, and I shall know also how to deal with *anybody* who interferes with me," he continued, glancing fiercely from one to the other.

"W—what shall you do with the Fox when he is dead?" ventured the Toucan.

"Swallow him," declared the Snake.

"You can't do that," argued the Monkey.

"Oh, can't I?" replied the Snake, opening his mouth and stretching it till it seemed as though his entire head was all mouth.

Quick as thought a brilliant inspiration seized Roderick. He felt in his pocket, found the dwindleberry, and without an instant's hesitation threw it into the Snake's wide-open mouth. Instantly the creature began to shrink and shrink till nothing was before them but a wriggling worm.

The Toucan, in his harsh voice, said, "I think I can finish this little matter," and, picking the creature up in his beak he flew up to the top of the high wall and dropped him over. The Dwindleberry Zoo was freed at last from the Snake!

(To be concluded.)

The Dwindleberry Zoo.

BY G. E. FARROW.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE END OF THE TAIL.



THE whole party experienced a sense of relief when they saw the Snake disappear over the wall, and the Monkey went up to Roderick and patted him on the back.

"Brave boy!" said he.

"That was a very clever thing to have thought of, and I'm sure we are all very grateful to you."

"I—I think the Toucan did most of the work," replied the boy, feeling very pleased with the praise, nevertheless.

"Not at all," retorted the Toucan. "It was your idea, and that was the main thing. You have freed us from a great source of trouble, and the whole of the Dwindleberry Zoo will be the happier for what you have done."

In the meantime the Fox, more dead than alive, had slunk off, and Dr. Owl had gone over to where the Goose was lying, and was gravely feeling her pulse.

"She's still alive," he said, after a moment or two. "We'll soon bring her to. Fetch some water, somebody."

Roderick and the Pig ran off to fetch some, and were soon back with a pailful.

The Doctor dashed some in the Goose's face and poured a little down her beak, and presently the poor thing gasped and opened her eyes.

"Where am I?" she cried, feebly.

"It's all right; you are amongst friends," said Dr. Owl, soothingly. "Keep calm; you'll soon be better."

"The Snake!—the Fox!" gasped the Goose.

"The Snake has gone for ever, and you have nothing further to fear from the Fox," said the Monkey.

"He—he—tried to kill me," shuddered the Goose.

"Who did?" demanded Dr. Owl.

"The Fox," said the Goose; "and he would have done so, only the Snake came up, and the two began to quarrel and fight till I was so frightened that I suppose I must have fainted. I—I—feel better now," she added, struggling to her feet and shaking the water from her feathers.

The Lion during this time had been sitting aside, evidently lost in thought.

"I have been wondering," he said, beckoning Roderick to him, "what will happen now that the Snake has gone. Will they elect another President?"

"No, your Majesty, not if we can help it," chimed in the Monkey.

"Besides, if they do," said Roderick, "don't you remember the splendid plan I thought of to make them elect you?"

"Ah, yes; I do remember something about it," said the Lion. "Tell me again."

"Why," explained the boy, "they elected the Snake because he was supposed to have more money than anybody else here. Now you have only to get the Goose to lay the golden eggs for you alone, and you will soon be the richest person in the Zoo, and in *that* case they are *bound* to elect you, you see."

Dr. Owl shook his head solemnly. "You mustn't rely upon that," he whispered, glancing over to where the Goose was talking to the Pig. "I shouldn't be surprised if she never laid another golden egg again. The shock to her system has been too great."

"In that case," rejoined the Lion, "it will be all the better, for I shall tell the people that if they make me their King again I shall abolish the use of money altogether. I'm sure we were much happier before ever it was brought into the kingdom."

"Hear, hear!" cried the rest of the animals. "Let's go and call a general meeting about it at once."

This suggestion was hailed with great favour, and the whole party set out for the Public Hall. The Town Crier was found and the Secretary-Bird sent out notices to everybody calling them to a meeting immediately, in the King's name.

The Public Hall was soon filled with an excited, curious, and chattering crowd of animals and birds. The news of the disappearance of the Snake spread rapidly and seemed to be received with great satisfaction by most of the creatures.

"He was very generous with his money, though," sighed a prosperous-looking Mole, sitting near Roderick.

"Yes, but what was the use of it?" chimed in the Jerboa, standing behind him. "It never did us any good, and we had to

pay for everything we wanted. I'm sure I think it was a perfect nuisance myself."

"I hear they are going to try and do away with money altogether," chimed in Roderick, anxious to hear how the news would be received.

"Are they, really?" said the Mole, looking at him curiously. "Er—er—I beg your pardon, but are you not the Roderick?"

"Yes," laughed the boy; "I am."

"Ah, really! Allow me to congratulate you. I see you have grown a tail; it improves your appearance so greatly that I hardly recognised you."

"Hush!" whispered the Jerboa, hurriedly; "don't you see it's false? You'll hurt his feelings by referring to it—and his whiskers, too—ridiculous."

Roderick had quite for the moment forgotten the tail which the Lord Chamberlain had fastened to his jacket, and also the hair which was still sticking to his face, and he was so embarrassed by the animals' personal remarks that he was glad to get up and change his seat.

He found himself "out of the frying-pan into the fire" though, for the creatures about him at the next place in which he sat mistook him for some kind of monkey, and would argue to his face as to what family he belonged, one maintaining that he was an Ourang-Outang and the other that he was an Ape.

While they were still excitedly debating the question the old Hippopotamus stumbled up on to the platform and rang the bell for "Silence!"

The Toucan thereupon came forward and, to Roderick's great surprise, made a most excellent speech, pointing out that they had all been much happier under a King than they had been under the Presidency of the Snake, and that the introduction of money into the kingdom had only caused confusion and unhappiness. He proposed that they should at once return to the old state of

things, that the King should be reinstated, and that all money should be declared worthless and of no value to any of the inhabitants of the Dwindleberry Zoo.

His speech was listened to with the greatest attention by all of the animals, birds, insects, etc., present, and he sat down amidst a storm of applause.

The Monkey thereupon rose to his feet and began to speak upon the same subject, but he was interrupted half-way through his



"THE GOOSE WAS TALKING TO THE PIG."

speech with cries from all parts of the hall of "The King! The King! Let us have King Leo restored! Send for the King!"

There was no denying them, and a messenger was sent without further delay, and very soon His Majesty, who had discarded his disguise, appeared in his royal robes.

He was received with acclamation by all of his subjects, and seemed for the moment quite overcome by the welcome he received. Then, in a few well-chosen words, he thanked them for their evident desire that he should return to the throne, and assured them that he would do his best to restore

the kingdom to the happy state which existed before the Snake had come to disturb them all. He pointed out that to *them* money was of no value, and that the golden coins which they possessed should only be regarded as medals, and useless for any practical purpose, and before he finished his speech he found an opportunity of referring gratefully to the part which Roderick, aided by the Toucan and the others, had played in ridding the Zoo of the objectionable intruder, the Snake.



"BUT HOW AM I TO GET BACK AGAIN WHEN I WANT TO GO?"
ASKED RODERICK."

Thereupon there was a great cheering and noise, and Roderick's name was called again and again, and he had to stand up with his friends the Toucan, the Monkey, and Dr. Owl and receive the thanks and congratulations of the audience.

Shortly after the meeting broke up very happily, and the King returned to the Palace accompanied by Roderick, who, the Lion

insisted, should in future have rooms in the Royal residence reserved for his use.

He was very much envied by the other subjects for this privilege, and was treated by them with the greatest respect whenever he went out. He, of course, discarded the false tail which he had worn as a disguise, but was continually being reproached for doing so by the animals, as they insisted that it made a great improvement to his appearance.

The days passed on happily for all, and things had gradually settled down into their old order. The money had by common consent been piled in a large heap as rubbish in one corner of the grounds near to the wall surrounding the Zoo, and one day Roderick, walking in the neighbourhood of this spot, suddenly realized that he was near to the Hole in the Wall where he had first entered.

"I certainly couldn't get back that way now, even if I wanted to," he thought, realizing that he was now his original size. "It would be fun, though, just to go back for a little while; I could take some dwindleberries with me, and so could make myself small enough to return whenever I wished. I think I'll get some and try it."

No sooner thought of than he set out for the Dwindleberry bush, which, as he had discovered, grew near to the place where he had been standing.

To his great dismay, however, he found on reaching the bush that it had withered away as though it had been attacked by blight, and the berries were all dried and black.

"A jolly good job, isn't it?" said a harsh voice by his side, and Roderick found the Toucan standing beside him.

"In what way?" asked Roderick. "I can't see that——"

"It will prevent any more Snakes and other objectionable creatures getting in through the Hole in the Wall," explained the Toucan.

"But how am I to get back again when I want to go?" asked Roderick, who suddenly realized that he had no desire to remain always in the

Dwindleberry Zoo, however pleasant it might be for a time.

"I don't think," said the Toucan, thoughtfully, "that you ever will be able to get back again; but surely—— Hark! What's that?"

"What do you mean?" asked Roderick.

"I thought I heard strange men's voices. Yes; look there—look!" cried the Toucan, in an excited voice, pointing to where the

heap of gold was lying some distance away. Lawyer Fox, who had been in great disgrace with all the animals since his attempt to kill the Goose, and had been slinking about and keeping as much out of sight as possible, shunned and avoided by all, was standing by the gold heap throwing handfuls of it over the wall. Presently, while they watched, two men's heads appeared at the top of the wall, wearing caps with peaks to them.

Roderick and the Toucan saw the Fox engage in conversation with the men and then hurriedly collect as many of the coins as possible, after which one of the men let down a rope which the Fox fastened about his waist and was drawn to the top of the wall, over which he disappeared.

Roderick was surprised when he saw the look of dismay which spread over the Toucan's face while all this was going on. Personally he felt that it was a good thing that the Fox had left the kingdom; he thought that they would all be likely to do better without him.

"But you don't realize," explained the Toucan, when Roderick mentioned this, "who those men were and what it all means."

"Who were they, then?" inquired the boy.

"Keepers from the real Zoo," declared the Toucan. "The Fox attracted their attention by throwing money over the wall, and has now gone to betray the secret of the existence of the Dwindleberry Zoo. We are not safe here another hour; they will knock the wall down, and we shall all be captured and put into cages. Come! The only thing to do is to go and warn the others to be prepared." The two sorrowfully went to the Palace, telling everyone they met on the way of the disturbing news; and, exactly as the Toucan had said, before even a public meeting could be called, a terrible noise was heard at the wall, and after repeated blows the sound of falling masonry.

Many of the animals
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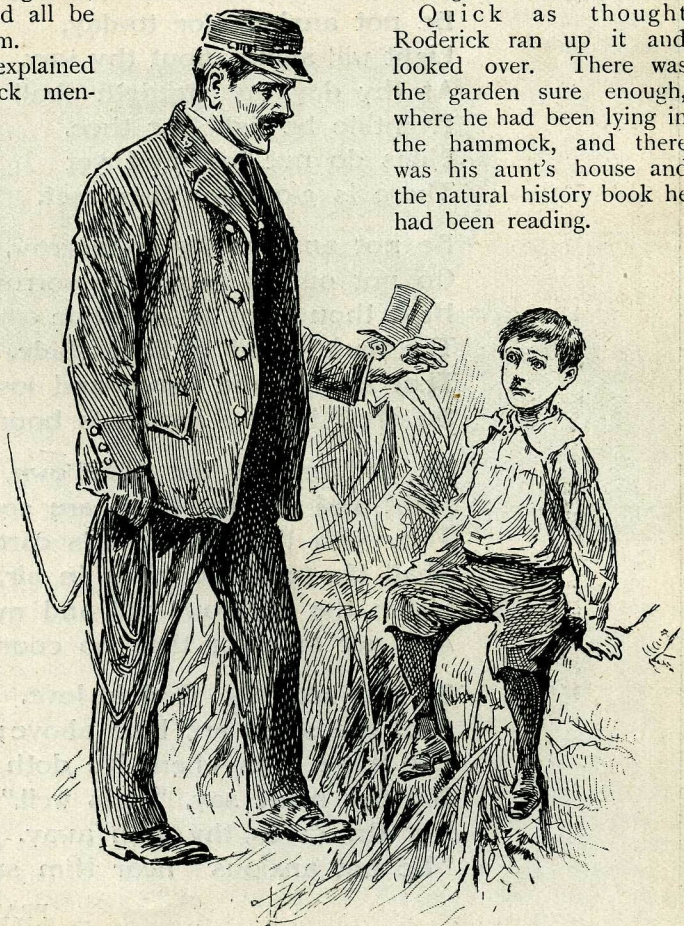
fled into hiding, and the birds flocked up into the trees, where they sat chattering excitedly and watching how events might turn out.

Roderick felt that there was nothing for him to do but to wait and see what would happen. He was sitting on the stump of a tree when a big burly man in uniform came up and demanded his name in a severe tone.

"Oh! you're the boy, are you?" he said, in reply to Roderick's answer to his question. "There's been a pretty set-out about you—hunting about for you everywhere and goodness knows what. The first thing to do is to put you over the wall into your own garden, and then they can do what they like with you. If you was my boy I'd——"

What he was going to say Roderick never knew, for at that moment another man came up with a long ladder, which he placed against the high wall.

Quick as thought Roderick ran up it and looked over. There was the garden sure enough, where he had been lying in the hammock, and there was his aunt's house and the natural history book he had been reading.



"A BIG BURLY MAN IN UNIFORM CAME UP AND DEMANDED HIS NAME."

Without waiting to think of the consequences, the boy clung to the top of the wall and let himself drop over.

He must have stunned himself in the fall, for he remembered nothing else till he found himself lying underneath the broken hammock with his head resting on the natural history book. In the distance he could hear the housemaid calling, "Master Roderick! Master Roderick! Are you not coming in to tea? The gong has sounded twice," and so Roderick got up slowly and went back to the house.

To his surprise no remark was made about his long absence, and he overheard his aunt, later on in the evening, telling someone that

he had been asleep in the garden all the afternoon.

This he felt to be absurd, and when, the next day, he was taken to the *real* Zoo, he looked anxiously about to see if he could recognise any of his old friends.

All the animals, however, which he saw there seemed far too stolid to have ever been in such a free-and-easy place as the Dwindleberry Zoo, though he persists to this day that when he got to the part of the Zoo where the Toucan was exhibited that remarkable-looking bird gave him a knowing wink, as though he, at any rate, remembered something of the adventures they had shared together in the immediate past.

THE END.

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